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Summary record of the 2nd meeting
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Chair: Mr. Gunnarsson ..... (Iceland)
later: Ms. Kaszás (Vice-Chair) ..... (Hungary)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 27: Social development (*continued*) (A/72/169)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/72/158 and A/72/211)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/72/159, A/72/161, A/72/166, A/72/189 and A/72/190)

1. **Mr. Barros Melet** (Chile) said that since the country's return to democracy, Chile had worked to put in place a rights-based social protection system. Under President Bachelet, particular emphasis had been placed on achieving social objectives and combating inequality. His Government was revising a social security programme that supported the most vulnerable groups and had introduced measures to help persons with disabilities enter the workforce.

2. Chile had presented its voluntary national review at the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development, identifying its main challenges in working towards the Sustainable Development Goals as reducing poverty and inequality and achieving sustainable and inclusive economic and social development. To address those challenges, his Government had launched an education reform, with a view to ensuring that everyone had access to inclusive, free and high-quality education up to the tertiary level; tax reforms, which were intended to increase gross domestic product by three percentage points to finance the educational reforms and enhanced social protection; and labour reforms, to strengthen collective labour rights and industrial relations.

3. Both income-based and multidimensional poverty indices were declining. According to income-based poverty measures, 11.7 per cent of the population were poor, while multidimensional poverty affected 20 per cent of the country. Children and young people were disproportionately affected by poverty, as were indigenous groups and rural communities, and his Government was working to promote their rights and strengthen policies on children.

4. His Government had taken a number of legal, policy and institutional measures to reduce inequality in the health sector. It had established a programme that provided all Chileans with treatment for specified conditions, was gradually extending universal health coverage and had introduced a system to cover high-cost treatments.

5. With regard to achieving greater equality between women and men, which was a pressing challenge, progress had been made in developing a national gender equality plan for the period 2018–2030, reforming the electoral system and taking affirmative action to increase the number of women elected to office. In addition, in August 2017 a law decriminalizing abortion in certain circumstances had been passed, and a bill on equal marriage had been brought before Congress.

6. **Mr. Morales López** (Colombia) said that implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development required continued commitment to eradicating all forms of poverty and reducing inequities. As noted in the Report on the World Social Situation 2016, one of the main challenges was growing inequality, which was hampering progress towards eradicating poverty and achieving other social development goals.

7. In the spirit of leaving no one behind, the development model must empower persons with disabilities, who were disproportionately affected by violence, poverty, unemployment and inequality, so that they could become agents of change and work towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. Families were also important agents of sustainable development, which was why his country was committed to ensuring that they were given the opportunity to flourish culturally, economically and socially and was coordinating its family policy with other policies.

8. Older persons should also be fully included and able to exercise their rights. In that connection, Colombia supported the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and the development of an international instrument on the human rights of older persons. Lastly, he noted that young people were agents of change and peacebuilding. Real change could only be achieved by empowering them. Highlighting the importance of ensuring effective youth participation, he said that the One Young World Summit would be held in Bogotá from in October 2017. Member States must promote the socioeconomic integration of young people.

9. **Ms. Natividad** (Philippines) said that the country's long-term development vision, "AmBisyon Natin 2040", had been developed following a nationwide study that had revealed that Filipinos hoped for a country where no one was poor and where people lived long and healthy lives in safe, vibrant, diverse and resilient communities. The Government had

adopted a number of measures to ensure that development was inclusive and that poor and marginalized communities were provided with opportunities and services.

10. The country's flagship poverty alleviation programme, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme, was a conditional cash transfer scheme that required children aged 3 to 18 to attend school and get immunized and dewormed; pregnant women to receive regular check-ups; and household heads to attend family development sessions. Members of participating households could also attend community-based programmes on microenterprise development and employment facilitation.

11. Over 4 million households were enrolled in the Programme, including 570,000 indigenous households and 217,000 households where at least one person had a disability. As a result of the Programme, poverty had been reduced by 1.5 million per year, and 87 per cent of participating parents were more optimistic about their children's futures.

12. Young people accounted for 30 per cent of the population and ensuring their empowerment, participation and well-being was a priority, as evidenced by the Philippine Youth Development Plan. Young people were encouraged to get involved in nine areas, namely health, education, economic empowerment, social inclusion, equity, governance, active citizenship, the environment and global mobility.

13. Under the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, tuition was free for students attending state and local universities and state-run technical and vocational schools. In addition, paid internships were available for poor college students, public employment service offices helped young people to secure employment, and the JobStart Philippines Programme provided out-of-school and at-risk young people with training and internships to increase their chances of securing employment.

14. **Mr. AlKadi** (Saudi Arabia) said that it was important to support Member States' efforts to implement their national development programmes in accordance with their national priorities and circumstances and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that regard, it was also important to take into consideration the religious, social, cultural and economic characteristics of States, and address the political factors that impeded social development, including foreign occupation, which had a significant negative impact on all individuals in society, particularly in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories.

15. Saudi Arabia continued to make significant investments in its human capital, including in the fields of health and education. In terms of human development, Saudi Arabia had been ranked among the most advanced countries in the world in the United Nations Development Programme 2016 Human Development Report. Saudi Arabia provided all its citizens with free, high-quality primary, secondary and tertiary education and every year allocated more than $53 billion, equivalent to almost 22 per cent of its national budget, to the country's education sector. The Government had also established 34 free State-run universities, and a well-funded educational programme that every year gave more than 150 thousand male and female Saudi students the opportunity to study abroad. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia allocated more than $32 billion annually, equivalent to some 14 per cent of the national budget, to support the country's healthcare system and medical research, and all Saudi citizens received free, high-quality healthcare services.

16. In line with the Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi Government was striving to increase the country's ranking in terms of social capital and raise it from twenty-sixth position to among the top 10 countries. The Vision was intended to ensure that Saudi citizens enjoyed social prosperity and to address the challenges impeding social development by reducing unemployment and boosting domestic and foreign investment to increase employment opportunities for all members of society. The Government was also keen to involve young people in Saudi Arabia in decision-making and had appointed many young people to prominent positions, believing that their ideas would help the country to become one of the most developed in the world. Saudi Arabia was also striving to promote the rights of older persons and persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoyed access to all the services they required. In closing, he underscored his Government's ongoing commitment to work with the United Nations and the international community to promote social development, reduce poverty, support health and educational programmes, and combat all forms of corruption.

17. **Ms. Burton** (Australia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people contributed to humankind's shared future not only as a useful economic resource, but also because they offered a nuanced perception of the challenges facing the world and could make intelligent contributions to public discourse. Young people were as diverse and complex as adults and should therefore be treated in the same way. Similarly, it was false to separate youth issues from adult ones, as young people were affected by the

same issues and faced many of the same barriers and inequalities as adults.

18. Many young people were unable see themselves reflected in those in power and felt disconnected from the decisions made. They did, however, consider themselves to be members of a global community and realized that the world's major challenges went beyond national borders. With support, young people could lead the way to a fair and just future in which all persons were free and equal, but the only way forward was as a community. She called on Member States to create such a community in which young people could take ownership of the journey to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and feel celebrated, supported, engaged, and powerful.

19. *Ms. Kaszás (Hungary), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

20. **Mr. Giorgio** (Eritrea) said that poverty, youth unemployment and social exclusion were serious challenges in developing countries. Economic growth was not enjoyed by all and in some cases it had come at the cost of certain sectors of society. Noting that social problems were one of the main causes of civil strife and state collapse, he said that there was a need to rethink national and international tools and policies; address the obstacles preventing States from achieving their socioeconomic goals, including the role of international financial and trade systems and political pressure; bring about lasting peace; and respect the right of countries to chart their own paths.

21. His country's nation-building strategy was geared towards achieving rapid, balanced, home-grown and sustainable economic growth, with a view to building a just, prosperous and harmonious nation. The key principles were self-reliance, equitable distribution of development and popular participation in decision-making. Considerable investments had been made to bridge the development gap, with an emphasis on improving the situation of historically disadvantaged groups. Despite limited national resources, the difficult regional situation and external hostilities, his Government was committed to ensuring food security, expanding access to drinking water, education and health care and improving the quality of life of all Eritreans.

22. Eritrea was one of the only African countries to have achieved all of the health-related Millennium Development Goals. Education was free all the way up to the tertiary level. The country was on track to achieve food security thanks to a major water and soil conservation scheme and increased use of irrigation, which allowed the country to harvest up to four times a year. In addition, nutrition had improved owing to the increased variety of produce available. The Government continued to make direct payments totalling $20 million to the families of soldiers killed in battle and worked closely with the Eritrean War-Disabled Veterans Association to eliminate social stigma and ensure that veterans received skills training and medical care and participated actively in decision-making.

23. **Ms. Kottearachchi** (Sri Lanka), speaking as a youth delegate, said that for years the responsibility of creating an environment conducive to the development of young people had rested with older generations, but the Sustainable Development Goals had given young people a pivotal role to play. Her country, which had a dedicated sustainable development ministry, strongly believed that young people had the potential to contribute to achieving the Goals. The current Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake, was from Sri Lanka and had inspired many young people through her activism, particularly as girls in Sri Lanka were often marginalized. Young people — defined in the National Youth Policy as those aged between 15 and 29 — accounted for close to 23 per cent of the population. They had diverse needs, wants and identities and it was vital, therefore, to engage with them and ensure that they were properly represented.

24. **Mr. Kannangara** (Sri Lanka), speaking as a youth delegate, said that his country had consistently worked on the issue of youth skills and was proud to have contributed to the declaration of 15 July as World Youth Skills Day. Skills development would yield long-term results by bridging the gap between the skills learned at school and university and the skills needed to secure employment. Since 1938, free education had been a fundamental right in Sri Lanka and the literacy rate was 96.3 per cent. However, young people lacked soft skills such as leadership, team work and critical thinking, all of which were critical to enable them to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The Government, the National Youth Services Council and the Federation of Youth Clubs were working to address the issue by providing support to young people.

25. **Mr. Estrada Meyer** (Brazil) said that despite recent economic difficulties, Brazil had continued its efforts to eliminate extreme poverty and improve living standards. Payments made to families under the Bolsa Familia programme, which complemented the income of more than 50 million poor Brazilians and encouraged recipients to seek educational, health and social assistance, had risen by 12.5 per cent in 2016.

The Unified Registry for Social Programmes, which contained the disaggregated data of 28 million low-income families, enabled the Government to run 20 programmes related to issues such as housing, child labour, electricity and sanitation.

26. Brazil had presented its voluntary national review in 2017, in which it had underlined its commitment to transparency and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. While extreme poverty had fallen, progress had been uneven. It was important to address inequality as it posed a major challenge to eradicating multidimensional poverty. Brazil had made much progress with regard to income distribution, but a great deal remained to be done.

27. Brazil was committed to promoting social inclusion and combating all forms of discrimination. Polices had been developed to address the specific needs of various groups, including women, people of African descent, children, migrants, refugees, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and indigenous peoples.

28. The Youth Statute of 2013 promoted youth-specific policies and encouraged youth participation. In 2015, a law had been passed regulating the inclusion of persons with disabilities, which had facilitated the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and led to advances in the health, labour and education sectors. Vulnerable persons over the age of 65 received a minimum monthly payment and over 4 million older persons and persons with disabilities received welfare benefits. The Happy Child Programme ensured that vulnerable children under the age of 6 received proper care, with a view to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

29. **Ms. Likina** (Russian Federation) said that Member States would be in a better position to achieve the 2030 Agenda if they had specific plans for carrying out the decisions of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly. The Russian Federation considered the Commission for Social Development to be an effective forum in which Member States could coordinate social policies.

30. Despite the impact of the global financial crisis and unilateral sanctions, the Russian Federation fully complied with its social obligations to its citizens. It continued to implement national strategies to promote women, children, elderly persons and the family, bringing many positive social benefits, such as low unemployment and a minimum wage commensurate with the cost of living. In the belief that traditional family bonds contributed to social stability and long-term sustainable development, it also held numerous events every 8 July to commemorate the Day of Family, Love and Fidelity.

31. Her country's policy with regard to young people was anchored on key provisions of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, with a focus on job creation and stable employment. The Russian Federation held numerous youth forums each year and would soon host the XIX World Festival of Youth and Students. With regard to the elderly, the Russian Government had introduced a plan of action to improve the material situation, health care and living conditions of senior citizens.

32. **Ms. Mwangi** (Kenya) said that her country welcomed the theme of the seventy-second session, "Focusing on people: striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet", which was in line with her Government's people-centred approach to development. That approach was underpinned by a robust legal and policy framework, including the Constitution and Vision 2030, the country's blueprint for development. Kenya prioritized the empowerment of women, young people and marginalized groups through affirmative action and various social protection policies.

33. Under the Affirmative Action Policy, 30 per cent of public procurement was reserved for women, young people and persons with disabilities, while the Persons with Disabilities Act required public service and semi-public organizations to reserve 5 per cent of posts for persons with disabilities. Some 75 per cent of students with disabilities were enrolled in mainstream schools and teachers received training in inclusive education. Since 2013, more than 700,000 households had benefited from the National Safety Net Programme, which benefited older persons, persons with severe disabilities, orphans and vulnerable children. Older persons were entitled to free health care and could access credit and cash transfers through the Consolidated Social Protection Fund. Lastly, the Government had refurbished and increased the number of technical and vocational training institutions.

34. Creating jobs and extending social protection to the most vulnerable were considerable challenges, particularly for developing countries. Domestic resource mobilization needed to be complemented by international cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Noting that peace and development were mutually reinforcing, she said that the security situation in the Horn of Africa was hindering the country's development. Kenya was investing in regional peace and security, but that diverted critical

resources away from development. To accelerate the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, Kenya had established a partnership platform that was intended to bring together stakeholders such as development partners, the private sector, civil society and the United Nations.

35. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, regrettably, progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals agreed at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development had fallen short of expectations. Many countries, including the Syrian Arab Republic, lacked the social safety nets necessary to avert disasters such as famine, while terrorism and foreign occupation continued to undermine peace and security and impede social development in many parts of the world.

36. The terrorist war that had been waged against the Syrian Arab Republic for over six years had severely undermined the country's security and development. Despite the huge challenges it faced, the Syrian Government continued to strive to foster economic growth, improve the living conditions of the Syrian people and counter Wahhabi terrorism and the extremist ideologies disseminated by terrorist groups — groups that continued to receive support from certain States in the Arab world, the region and beyond. Those terrorist groups had destroyed grain reserves, water treatment and power generation plants, bridges, schools, hospitals and even Muslim and Christian houses of worship. Their systematic destruction of Syria's infrastructure, coupled with the coercive unilateral economic measures imposed on the Syrian people by the very same States that claimed to be protecting the Syrian people's interests, had devastated the country and constituted a brazen violation of the rights to development and to healthcare.

37. The Syrian Government had submitted evidence to the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights that the more than 58 sets of unilateral coercive measures imposed against the Syrian Arab Republic had caused significant damage to all sectors of the Syrian economy, while a 2016 report by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia had underscored that the inhumane unilateral economic measures imposed on the Syrian Arab Republic by the United States of America and the European Union had had a significant negative impact on the country's civilian population.

38. In closing, he underscored his Government's ongoing commitment to work with the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to promote social development. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the international community must make every effort to counter Wahhabist, takfirist terrorism and reject unilateral economic measures.

39. **Ms. Hyeon** Gyo Suh (Republic of Korea), speaking as a youth delegate, said that States and Governments should prioritize gender equality and the empowerment of women by ensuring that women were properly represented, raising public awareness of gender equality and creating institutional frameworks to prevent gender-based violence. Persons with disabilities were valuable agents of sustainable development and must be given the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Efforts must be made to safeguard their living standards and ensure that they had access to education and skills training. In the light of the ageing global population, countries must develop well-designed pension and health-care systems and learn to harness the skills of older people.

40. Youth empowerment through education and participation in decision-making processes was critical in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In the Republic of Korea, young people were making their voices heard by engaging with the Government and local authorities to propose policies and monitor decision-making processes. A number of new social policies had been introduced, including one that was intended to boost youth employment by imposing mandatory quotas on the public sector.

41. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia) said that his country's fifth national development plan, which covered the period 2017–2022, was the result of nationwide consultations and took into account the realities on the ground and the aspirations of all Namibians. One of the focus areas of the plan was social transformation, including human capital and social development. Young people accounted for 37 per cent of the population and his Government was committed to harnessing the demographic dividend, in line with the African Union's theme for the year 2017, "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth". The plan called for increased investment in education, health care and housing.

42. Namibia prioritized pro-poor policies and social development. For the financial year 2017/18, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture had received the largest share of the budget — 24 per cent — while the Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare had also received substantial portions of the budget. The system of grants for orphans and vulnerable children was being expanded, including in remote areas. The

Government was working to keep vulnerable persons above the poverty line and protect them from the effects of inflation. However, the global downturn had severely impacted the country's economy and forced it to make its social safety net more cost-effective.

43. The Government had taken note of the recommendations of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, as contained in her report on her mission to Namibia (A/HRC/36/48/Add.2). Given that there was no guiding policy framework to deal with older persons' issues, the Ministry of Health and Social Services had embarked on a consultative process with a view to formulating such a framework.

44. **Mr. Rasuli** (Afghanistan) said that Afghanistan had aligned its policies, strategies and development plans with the Sustainable Development Goals. The Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework included three programmes to promote the achievement of the Goals related to poverty reduction and social inclusion. First, the social protection programme focused on increasing the skills and productivity of poor people by providing them with access to labour-intensive paid employment. A substantial number of vulnerable citizens, such as persons with disabilities, widows and elderly citizens would require more targeted assistance. Second, the women's empowerment programme provided start-up technical and financial support to businesses owned by women, as well as funding to enhance women's vocational skills and financial literacy. Third, the citizens' charter programme consisted of a series of partnerships between the Government and communities.

45. The development of Afghanistan could not be guaranteed without peace. Security challenges remained a serious concern for the Afghan Government and people, as terrorist groups targeted public infrastructure and innocent civilians on a daily basis. Although such groups hindered efforts to build a peaceful and prosperous country, Afghanistan remained determined to secure the country from the enemies of civilization and humanity.

46. **Ms. Pham** Thi Kim Anh (Viet Nam) said that inequality was increasingly prevalent and threatened to undermine the progress that had been made in social development since the World Summit for Social Development. The adverse effects of inequality impinged on every aspect of life and negatively affected growth. Reduction of inequality had become vital not only as a way of bolstering social and economic development but also of enhancing social cohesion, political stability and peace.

47. Viet Nam considered comprehensive and high-quality education to be an effective solution to inequality. Education was the main pathway by which vulnerable groups such as women, adolescent girls and persons with disabilities could achieve a better life. Citizens empowered with knowledge, skills and self-confidence were also better placed to control their lives and participate in and contribute to the development process. The Vietnamese Government currently earmarked 20 per cent of its budget to fund tuition fee exemptions and subsidies, and student scholarships and loans, with special consideration for ethnic minorities.

48. **Ms. Krisnamurthi** (Indonesia) said that in the context of the 2030 Agenda, it was important to empower people living in vulnerable situations and ensure their inclusive engagement in the planning and implementation of policies that affected them; promote access to better education, including opportunities to acquire skills required in the knowledge-based economy; and foster active partnership within the international community. The commitments made in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development were important complements to the 2030 Agenda.

49. Between 2006 and 2016, Indonesia had reduced the percentage of its population living in poverty from 17.75 per cent to 10.7 per cent. Recognizing the family as a fundamental agent of its poverty reduction strategy, the Government had also launched a programme to provide access to free health care and education and adopted a national strategy on the elimination of violence against children. In addition, Indonesia had mainstreamed gender equality in its development agenda, had increased the number of women in decision-making bodies, was establishing a commission to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and had introduced strategies to enhance the health care, participation levels and protection of elderly persons.

50. **Ms. Sorto Rosales** (El Salvador) said that although the vision and objectives approved during the World Summit for Social Development remained relevant, success in reducing poverty, decreasing the gap between developed and developing countries and eradicating inequality had been mixed. To implement the 2030 Agenda, the international community must address inequality between and within countries, while respecting the sovereignty and specificities of each country, abiding by the principle of common but

differentiated responsibilities and placing human beings at the centre of all public initiatives.

51. El Salvador had managed to reduce extreme poverty from 16.1 per cent in 2001 to 7.9 per cent in 2016 by targeting the structural causes of poverty. Since poverty tended to affect vulnerable or marginalized individuals or groups and at different stages in their lives, approaches to countering poverty, inequality and exclusion should be universal and focus on the specific needs of those groups and persons. Thus, given the greater difficulty of escaping poverty at an advanced age and the importance of giving an active role to the elderly in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, her Government had expanded coverage of the non-contributory State pension and reduced illiteracy rates among the elderly. It had also prioritized young people in its national policies by considering them as an at-risk group, rights holders and strategic development actors. In addition, efforts were being made to provide education in sexual and reproductive health and rights, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and the United Nations Population Fund.

52. **Ms. Rodríguez Camejo** (Cuba) said that the eradication of poverty was the main pathway to development, as highlighted in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. Twenty years on from its adoption, progress in reducing poverty had been uneven and Member States were no closer to eradicating hunger or social exclusion. Member States invested huge sums each year in military expenditures, and yet failed to meet official development assistance commitments or provide sufficient new, predictable funding for genuine cooperation.

53. Cuba was working towards the Sustainable Development Goals with the moral force of having met the Millennium Development Goals and, insofar as its modest means allowed, would continue to assist other developing countries. The low infant mortality rates were a strong indicator of its social development, and Cuba had been the first country to eradicate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis. The Government had also brought life expectancy to 78 years, eradicated illiteracy and introduced free and universal health care and education.

54. That progress had been made despite the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States for over 50 years and strengthened under the current Administration. Its criminal policy had subjected the Cuban people to hardship, impeded the country's development, affected other nations and continued to harm the interests of United States citizens and companies. Ultimately, States would be able to achieve the Goals of the 2030 Agenda only if they placed social development at the heart of public policies and firmly committed to solidarity and genuine cooperation.

55. **Ms. Picco** (Monaco) said that social inclusion and social protection were key aspects of the social development policy of Monaco. The Government offered aid and subsidies to persons with disabilities for access to housing, transport, health care, sport and culture; had created a special status for non-professional caregivers of children with disabilities; allocated funds for the education of children and adults with disabilities; and regulated the construction of apartment buildings to ensure that they were fit for persons with reduced mobility. It had also introduced regulations to protect persons with disabilities from physical, psychological and sexual violence and economic obstacles. All judicial, police, medical and social service professionals were required to undergo training in that regard. The Government had also established a special commission to oversee the working conditions of persons with disabilities, who could lodge complaints to an ombudsman for any perceived discrimination against them. Monaco had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in September 2017 and on 3 December each year organized awareness-raising campaigns to commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

56. **Mr. Overskott** (Norway), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the inclusion of young people was instrumental to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly because Member States had committed to leave no one behind. Special measures needed to be taken to achieve Goal 4, since marginalized children, such as those from poor families, children with disabilities, girls and children from cultural or linguistic minorities, continued to be disproportionately left behind. Given the importance of safe learning environments for children living in conflict zones or exposed to violence, sexual abuse or prostitution, he urged Member States to protect schools in conflict areas and to join the Safe Schools Declaration.

57. Young people were a unique demographic group that could contribute significantly to peace and reconciliation provided that appropriate policies were in place to enable their participation. Recalling Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security, he called on Member States to

include young people in peace negotiations, policymaking and decision-making.

58. **Ms. Moe** (Norway), speaking as a youth delegate, urged Member States to gather in-depth knowledge of children in order to tailor policies to those who lived without parental care or were at risk of losing such care. Broad initiatives relating to children in general did not improve the conditions of that target group sufficiently.

59. In their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Member States should heed the voices of all persons who had historically been excluded because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. National and religious particularities did not exempt Governments from their responsibilities to promote and protect their citizens' human rights and fundamental freedoms. Member States should also report regularly on the human rights situation of members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community and ensure that the concerns of those groups were incorporated into programmes related to the Sustainable Development Goals.

60. **Mr. Kapambwe** (Zambia) said that Zambia remained committed to fostering social justice, equality and inclusiveness, as emphasized in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. Nevertheless, poverty levels remained unacceptably high, with over half of the Zambian population living below the poverty line, particularly in rural areas.

61. The Government had responded with numerous economic reforms to promote inclusive growth and sustainable development, all of which underpinned the role of the family as the fundamental unit of society for promoting social integrity and cushioning citizens from socioeconomic difficulties. The most recent national development plan prioritized human development and the reduction of poverty and inequality. The Government also planned to finalize new legislation on social protection by the end of 2017 and had increased budgetary allocations to social protection programmes from 2.7 to 4.2 per cent between 2015 and 2017. Zambia was also working with development partners to strengthen and expand social protection programmes. As a result, national coverage of social cash transfer programmes was projected to more than double in 2017 and would be scaled up further in 2018.

62. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that social development was an integral part of sustainable development that deserved more attention at both the national and international levels. The increasing interdependence of Member States meant that the fulfilment of social development commitments required enhanced international cooperation.

63. The Islamic Republic of Iran had invested considerably in providing its citizens with free education and low-cost health care, as shown by the country's higher ranking in the human development index. At the start of the 2017–18 academic year, its schools had welcomed some 400,000 children of undocumented refugees as part of the commitment to ensure that no child was left behind.

64. The national economic, cultural, and social development plan for the period 2016–2021 included numerous measures to reduce poverty, empower the poor and other disadvantaged persons and promote social insurance and pensions. The Secretariat National Council of the Elderly advised Government agencies on issues faced by elderly persons and proposed regulations to address them. Policymakers actively pursued the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities by setting quotas for the number of persons with disabilities taking university entrance exams and offering tax and insurance incentives to entrepreneurs offering work to persons with disabilities.

65. The Islamic Republic of Iran promoted the family as the basic and fundamental unit of society that contributed to the social inclusion of all, especially young persons, persons with disabilities and the elderly.

66. **Ms. Al-Temimi** (Qatar) said that, in order to accelerate implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, the international community must foster an environment that was conducive to social development, and must focus, in particular, on empowering individuals, and especially individuals belonging to poor and marginalized groups. Furthermore, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the international community must redouble its efforts to address the social challenges posed by crises, tensions and natural disasters. On that basis, Qatar had adopted a people-centred approach in its national development plans and had enacted legislation and taken practical steps to promote development among all sectors within Qatari society.

67. Education was the key to development, and Qatar had developed and supported innovative educational programmes and initiatives both within the country and abroad. Qatari educational projects and institutions had, in fact, provided high-quality primary education

to millions of children and young people worldwide, particularly in crisis- and conflict-stricken regions.

68. Qatar was encouraging young people to play a more prominent role in society and development initiatives within the country and beyond. To that end, and to strengthen their capacity to reject violent extremism, it provided young people with education, training and job opportunities, and supported initiatives to encourage innovation and creativity among young people. In that regard, the Qatar-based organization Silatech had recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force with a view to countering extremism through youth empowerment and employability initiatives in the Arab region.

69. Qatar had adopted laws and policies to strengthen the family, which was the fundamental unit of society and could play a key role in spurring social and economic development, and, for over 12 years, had facilitated, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Committee's negotiations concerning resolutions on the International Year of the Family. Qatar had also taken steps to strengthen and uphold the rights of persons with disabilities, facilitate their full integration into society and empower them to play an active role in the country's development initiatives. Qatar also accorded particular attention to the rights and needs of older persons.

70. As a result of its successful programmes and policies to promote social and economic development, Qatar ranked first in the Arab world on the human development index of the United Nations Development Programme and thirty-third in the world. Regrettably, however, Qatar's successes in that area were threatened by the illegal unilateral measures that had been adopted against her country. Those measures not only undermined Qatar's efforts to promote development, but also constituted a serious violation of human rights in that they seriously threatened the country's social cohesion.

71. **Mr. Phansourivong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that given the centrality of social development on the global development agenda, the international community must find ways to address the challenges in areas such as health, education, poverty eradication and the reduction of inequality. Despite the fact that the Lao People's Democratic Republic was a least developed country, his Government had invested significantly in social and economic development and environmental protection. The Sustainable Development Goals had been mainstreamed into the eighth Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016–2020), leading to reduced poverty, improved health care, better education, more employment opportunities and better social security. As youth were the backbone of the country, his Government had also invested in resources to support their development through education, vocational training, job opportunities and campaigns against drug abuse. In addition, it had promoted gender equality at every level in the public and private sectors.

72. His country was committed to fulfilling its obligations as a State party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Government had also introduced measures to eliminate social discrimination against such persons, and the Lao Disabled People's Association was working to ensure respect for their rights.

73. Respect and care for the elderly had always been an important part of Lao cultural values, and older persons in a family were seen as a source of inspiration, love and warmth for other members of the family and community. His Government was committed to continuing its work to improve development so that everyone would enjoy a better life.

74. **Mr. Hendricks** (South Africa) said that his country had been working tirelessly to align the 2030 Agenda with the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework, the Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the National Development Plan 2030 and ensure effective implementation. Those developmental frameworks were instrumental to poverty eradication, inequality reduction, social inclusion, and the improvement of the living standards of all South Africans, particularly the most vulnerable. However, the majority of young people were still socially and economically excluded. His delegation welcomed the convening of high-level events on the topic of the demographic dividend, held on the margins of the high-level segment of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, and called for the acceleration of efforts targeting youth employment and social inclusion, mindful of the high cost of inaction on the future of society.

75. In commemoration of the International Day of Older Persons, his Government had also organized an event to promote awareness about services to older persons and to remind South Africans to respect and uphold the dignity of all senior citizens. Given the fundamental role family played in social development, his delegation would continue to advocate for the protection of the family in all its forms.

76. **Mr. Skinner-Klée** (Guatemala) said that it was important to promote the rights of persons with

disabilities, who were often unable to fully enjoy their rights because of issues such as poor accessibility and negative attitudes. With the support of CBM International, the United Nations Children's Fund and the National Institute of Statistics, Guatemala had carried out its second national disability survey, which had revealed that 10.2 per cent of the population had a disability. The issue of disability had been included in the upcoming census, which would enable the Government to tailor its efforts to support persons with disabilities.

77. In addition, his Government was committed to supporting young people, who were the largest yet most poorly represented population group. Sustained and adequate investment was essential in order to tap the talents of young people and ultimately achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Young people must not be excluded from the labour market or the education system, as that not only resulted in poverty but also lost opportunities for training and development.

78. Acknowledging the difficulties faced by older persons, he said that many were lonely, did not have any regular source of income, were not able to secure suitable employment and did not receive social security benefits or a pension. States must increase their efforts to safeguard the fundamental freedoms and quality of life of older persons, including by adopting a specific instrument that reflected the needs of older persons. Lastly, poverty was not solely the result of inequality, but also inadequate technology transfer, human capital flight, failure to implement international trade treaties, corruption, discrimination and lack of solidarity.

79. **Reverend Grysa** (Observer for the Holy See) said that one of the most glaring reasons why people continued to suffer from hunger and inequality, many of them being left behind, was that economic growth did not guarantee social development or address the root causes of inequality and exclusion. Investment, jobs and a diversified economy were indeed indispensable for lifting the poor out of poverty. However, a broader understanding of integral human development was needed in order to achieve lasting gains. It was also necessary to reconsider the understanding of the purpose of the international economy. In an encyclical letter, Pope Francis had counselled that the vision of "might is right" had engendered immense inequality, injustice and acts of violence, since resources ended up in the hands of the first comer or the most powerful. Instead, the global economy should benefit everyone, both materially and spiritually, and the principle of subsidiarity should be applied in social and economic policies.

80. A "culture of encounter" that recognized the poor and vulnerable and involved working with them directly should be promoted. The needs of such people, especially the elderly, youth, persons with disabilities and migrants, should not be reduced to economic terms, and by embracing that culture, those in power could develop their sense of responsibility for the common good. The elderly and persons with disabilities, in particular, faced serious discrimination and violence and needed access to essential support services to engage with society; that was a matter of basic human dignity. More investment in health care and pension funds, for instance, was necessary in order to reduce their vulnerability. Government support for family-based care could save public money and facilitate the provision of care by loved ones.

81. Work was not only a necessity, but a path to growth, human development and personal fulfilment, and social development meant dignified work for young people. Policies encouraging apprenticeships and small loans and opportunities, especially for young women and adolescent girls, should be put in place.

82. The human rights of migrants and refugees, whether migrating for economic reasons or because of persecution and conflict, must be respected and their access to basic services such as primary health care and education for children must be guaranteed. Special attention and care for unaccompanied migrant children and youth benefited the societies where they remained or to which they eventually returned.

83. **Ms. Dikanska** (Bulgaria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people should be equal participants in all decision-making processes at the national and global levels. They possessed the knowledge and courage to tackle the major issues facing the world. However, in order to realize their full potential, several challenges to social development needed to be overcome, in order to provide youth with employment, career opportunities and the right to quality education. Those challenges were seen in Bulgaria and around the world. Young people had to have soft skills, applicable across job titles and industries, to participate in the labour market. Participation in sport was one way that the soft skills of discipline, leadership, perseverance and respect for others, for instance, could be honed and then transferred to the classroom or workplace. It was unfortunate that there was still a lack of recognition of the educational advantages it offered to young girls and boys, as such skills contributed to building personality and to social development in general.

84. **Ms. Pandzharova** (Bulgaria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that given the great movements of refugees and migrants currently taking place, intercultural dialogue was an effective tool for building trust and tolerance and supporting social development. Young people in particular could contribute to the social integration of refugees and migrants through education and training, thus enabling them to participate in the labour market. Young people were agents of positive social change, and their full participation was crucial for achieving peace and respect for human rights. Her delegation called upon Member States to recognize the role of young people in ensuring equality, social cohesion and sustainable development for all.

85. **Mr. Joshi** (India) said that his country was working rapidly to deliver on its commitments made in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, and that equality, social development and the removal of social and economic discrimination were the cornerstone of Government policies. In the area of education, it had attained near full enrolment in primary school and had narrowed the gender gap in middle and higher education. Millions of people were being lifted out of poverty via social development and employment-generation schemes, with priority being given to disadvantaged members of society. The ambitious inclusion policies implemented by the Government, including biometric identity cards, a financial inclusion programme and mobile telephony, had been leveraged to improve efficiency and close financial gaps, resulting in $25 billion worth of benefits being disbursed to 329 million beneficiaries. In addition, other social-sector reforms were being carried out to eliminate open defecation, provide maternity benefits and simplify the tax on goods and services.

86. **Ms. Priya** (India), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the 1.8 billion youth of the world constituted a valuable asset and must be taken into consideration in a sustainable development agenda. Since over 400 million Indians were estimated to be in the age group of 10–24 years, their health and education were central to benefiting from their tremendous potential and realizing the demographic dividend. To that end, the Government had placed emphasis on the empowerment of youth through skill development and entrepreneurship programmes. A new ministry dedicated to such matters had been established, and it had launched several programmes to build capacities and improve the employability of the youth population by such means as increasing the availability of credit and harnessing the benefit of information and communications technology.

87. The international community must understand and respect diversity, and promote equal opportunities and the participation of all nations in the advancement of youth, who were at the heart of the sustainable development. The right to development was an inalienable human right.

88. **Mr. Sukhee** (Mongolia) said that the timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was vital for ensuring social development and well-being for all. His country had been an early adopter of the Sustainable Development Goals, and his Government had incorporated the Goals into its plans and programmes addressing poverty, education, health, employment, social protection, gender equality, youth, ageing, disabilities and intersectoral coordination and partnership.

89. Recently amended legislation on social welfare had introduced additional needs-based criteria for caregiver allowances, and the Government had also taken measures to improve the effectiveness of programmes benefiting children. Mongolia was a young nation, with nearly 65 per cent of the population under age 40, and recognizing the central role of youth in society, the Parliament had adopted the Law on Youth Development, which addressed their responsibilities and provided for the establishment of a fund dedicated to their development. The Parliament had also amended laws concerning the elderly and adopted Mongolia's first comprehensive law on the rights of persons with disabilities, which was in compliance with the relevant United Nations Convention.

90. A national programme on cooperative development was currently in its final stage of implementation, resulting in a favourable economic situation and legal environment for cooperatives and small- and medium-size enterprises. The programme also enhanced the competitiveness of such entities and created new jobs. His delegation was the main sponsor of a biennial resolution on cooperatives in social development, and firmly believed that they would enable the fullest possible participation in economic and social development and contribute to the eradication of poverty and hunger.

91. **Mr. Tumasyan** (Georgia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that his generation of young people was fully committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and that young people should be given equal opportunities and the tools necessary to do so. Education must be the highest priority, since

comprehensive and global solutions to borderless challenges would require investment in youth — the best resource of the planet. Technological advancement could free human beings from work that could be done by machines, so that people could devote themselves to developing civilization. Technology was the key to using renewable energy to save the planet from the effects of climate change. Youth should be able to influence decisions related to their futures and use the Sustainable Development Goals as tools to ensure the accountability of Governments and the United Nations. Every country should have youth delegates to the United Nations so that the world would be a better place for everyone by 2030. New leaders were needed, and the youth of today would become those leaders of tomorrow.

92. The greatest challenge for Georgia in achieving the Goals was providing their benefits to the people most excluded from the 2030 Agenda, Georgian compatriots living in the regions of Georgia occupied by the Russian Federation. The youth of Georgia had great respect and love for their Abkhaz and Ossetian brothers and sisters, and cared about their social and economic development and the preservation of their respective traditions, cultures and languages. They also welcomed the efforts of the Government of Georgia towards reconciliation with those compatriots.

93. One day, next to the piece of the Berlin Wall that now rested at United Nations Headquarters, there would be a piece of the razor wire fence that Russia had built to divide the Georgian people. The youth of Georgia extended a hand of love, friendship and brotherhood to the youth of Abkhazia and Ossetia, and called for constructive dialogue, cooperation and communication that would lead to a shared peaceful, prosperous and sustainable future.

94. **Mr. Konfourou** (Mali) said that his Government had executed several strategies to improve living conditions for the population and reduce their vulnerability to social risks. It was also working tirelessly to implement a national policy on social development, which would promote the socioeconomic integration of older persons, persons with disabilities, and women and children in difficult situations, and improve humanitarian action and social aid for the poor and victims of natural disasters. The policy would also help to build community capacities through cooperatives, mutual health insurance associations and employee-owned companies and increase the access of the poor to income-generating activities.

95. The Government had taken measures to ensure that disadvantaged groups had access to employment and basic social services, prioritizing persons with disabilities in particular. Since 2007 the Government had also been carrying out social housing programmes for the most disadvantaged in society and those with medium to low incomes. New agencies had been created to promote employment and to develop young people's entrepreneurship, since youth were enormously important for the country's sustainable development. Currently, the main challenge was the expansion of programmes for compulsory health insurance and medical assistance. Another major Government programme to be implemented over the period 2017–2020 would improve the availability of local investment for the benefit of the least fortunate members of society, thereby reducing inequality and maintaining purchasing power.

96. **Mr. Beleffi** (San Marino) said that Member States should make a collective commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights. The challenges of persistent human rights violations in situations of armed conflict; racial and religious discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance; growing inequality and social exclusion in both developing and the richest countries; and discrimination, abuse and trafficking of refugees and migrants were all interconnected. States must therefore act together to fight poverty and promote employment and decent work, in order to build a more inclusive, safe and just society for all.

97. As required by the 2030 Agenda, the Republic of San Marino had always paid special attention to vulnerable groups. It had been one of the first States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and would fully implement it through legislative frameworks and policies for the full participation of persons with disabilities in employment and in the social and cultural spheres. San Marino had signed the voluntary compact to combat and prevent sexual abuse and exploitation in the context of United Nations peacekeeping missions, and hoped for universal ratification and full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols. San Marino had also adopted policies for integrating senior citizens into society, recognizing their experience, knowledge and culture.

98. **Ms. Rocz** (Hungary), speaking as a youth delegate, said that she had travelled around Hungary to promote the Sustainable Development Goals among young people, who had many innovative ideas for solving the problems in their local environment, offering sustainable solutions that could be passed on to future generations. Experts working on youth

policies should consult young people, who could be an enormous asset to their society if included in decision-making and implementation processes. Seeing the tangible results of their work would make young people even more motivated and dedicated.

99. During her tour of Hungary, a survey had been conducted to see which of the Sustainable Development Goals were the most important for young people. The results had shown that, in addition to Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth and Goal 10 on reduced inequalities, the most important goal was Goal 4 on quality education — an education that offered both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Achieving Goal 4 was a prerequisite for achieving the other 16 Goals. Every young person should be provided with a secure and peaceful environment for a happy and healthy life — the future could be built by building peace.

100. **Ms. Choden** (Bhutan) said that her delegation attached great importance to addressing social development, in accordance with her country's national development philosophy of Gross National Happiness. The eradication of poverty was an overarching goal in national development plans, and Bhutan had been using the National Multidimensional Poverty Index for the past seven years as an official poverty measurement to assess people's needs and formulate appropriate policies. As a result, the proportion of people trapped in poverty had fallen from 23 per cent to 12 per cent between 2007 and 2012. The findings of the Second National Population and Housing Census, conducted in May 2017, were expected to show further reductions.

101. The Government made every effort to invest in the future of young people, who made up 60 per cent of the population. The Overseas Education and Skills Development Scheme provided preferential lending for young people seeking overseas education and skills development. Through such initiatives, the financial institutions of Bhutan were supporting social development.

102. The Royal Society for Senior Citizens provided opportunities to retired seniors to work on the conservation and promotion of cultural heritage. The Ability Bhutan Society empowered individuals with disabilities to live independently and with dignity, through advocacy, direct intervention and training for caregivers.

103. Women played a growing role in leadership and decision-making in Bhutan. The Government was promoting policies that mainstreamed women's participation in all sectors of the economy. The Government had already established 231 early child care development centres, and women civil servants were entitled to six months maternity leave. The Government was working on policies to expand this to the private sector.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/72/SR.3

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Third Committee

Summary record of the 3rd meeting
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Chair: Mr. Gunnarsson ..... (Iceland)
later: Ms. Al-Temimi (Vice-Chair) ..... (Qatar)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 27: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/72/158 and A/72/211)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/72/159, A/72/161 and A/72/161/Corr.1, A/72/166, A/72/189 and A/72/190)

1. **Mr. Richardson** (Saint Lucia), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that CARICOM was committed to eradicating poverty, ending hunger, combating inequality and building just and inclusive societies, in line with the goals set forth in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. The secretariat of CARICOM had been working with Caribbean Community member States, institutions and organizations, as well as regional and international partners, to develop and implement initiatives to enable individuals in the region to realize their full development potential, of which a recent example was the Regional Human Resource Development 2030 Strategy, adopted in March 2017. The springboard for the implementation of that strategy, the Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community (2015–2019), was focused on building economic, social, environmental and technological resilience, with the aim of fostering economic growth, reducing poverty and unemployment, and improving quality of life and integration within the Community through a systems approach. Social resilience, in particular, was a key strategic priority for the Community that would require concentrating on the key drivers of economic reform; fostering youth development; advancing health and wellness; and enhancing crime prevention initiatives and programmes. In that connection, the devastating impact of the ongoing hurricane season in the Caribbean region had demonstrated the need to strengthen the capacities of CARICOM countries to withstand the unpredictable challenges increasingly faced by small, vulnerable nations.

3. Social inequality persisted, as certain individuals and social groups continued to be denied opportunities, access to resources, a voice, and respect for their rights and citizenship on the basis of their age, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability and economic status. Reducing income inequality between countries remained particularly challenging, as the current rate of reduction in global income inequality was expected to halt, owing to stagnant or slow growth across regions and high population growth in countries with a high incidence of poverty where wide inequality and patterns of growth that were not sufficiently inclusive coexisted. In advanced economies, the gap between rich and poor had reached the highest level in decades, with recent data from Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries showing that the richest 10 per cent of the population earned 9.6 times the income of the poorest 10 per cent.

4. Human beings were the primary source and the ultimate determinant of the development process. In that regard, investment in building institutional and human resource capacities within government agencies in order to ensure their successful engagement in, and management of, multi-stakeholder partnerships was of critical importance, particularly in view of the recent shift in the geography of global poverty towards middle-income countries, which accounted for almost three quarters of the world's poor. Strengthening social development would require promoting inclusive institutions, enhancing social participation and pursuing development goals within appropriate structural frameworks. In that connection, CARICOM had been reformulating its development agenda to reflect a greater emphasis on, inter alia, regionalism and reform of governance mechanisms.

5. **Ms. Moldoisaeva** (Kyrgyzstan) said that concerted efforts by the international community had resulted in significant progress in global social development and that social rights were now at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, much remained to be done to eliminate poverty, ensure full employment and decent work for all, and achieve social integration. In addition, coordinated and comprehensive measures were needed to address mass movements of refugees and migrants and escalating inequality.

6. Her Government was formulating a national development strategy for 2040 aimed at reducing poverty, strengthening food security, ensuring high-quality education and health care, and improving economic growth, energy development and environmental protection. At the heart of the strategy was a project designed to increase transparency at the level of the central Government and prevent corruption, as well as to improve the quality and security of living conditions, strengthen education and

health care, and overcome the digital divide in order to create a knowledge-based society.

7. As a result of her country's commitment to increasing the number of children receiving a preschool and primary school education, more than 98 per cent of children in Kyrgyzstan had attended school in 2016. Her Government had also adopted a strategy to enhance the quality of, and expand access to, education by 2020, and the infant mortality rate in Kyrgyzstan had decreased from 66 to 29 per thousand between 1997 and 2014. The importance of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals for the welfare, empowerment and protection of the rights of children could not be overemphasized.

8. Kyrgyzstan had strong legal and political frameworks for the protection of the rights of women. In that connection, it had adopted a national strategy to achieve gender equality by 2020, which focused on strengthening women's participation in the economy, ensuring their equal political participation, and enhancing their access to job-specific education and legal resources. All draft legislation was subject to compulsory review from a gender perspective prior to adoption, and the Government had established a national council on gender, which comprised representatives of more than 10,000 non-governmental organizations. Efforts had also been made to increase the representation of women in the central Government and local and judicial bodies, and provisions of the national Criminal Code relating to domestic violence had been strengthened. Moreover, in May 2017, a new law had been enacted on protection from domestic violence, covering spouses in civil and polygamous marriages, as well as former spouses cohabitating out of necessity.

9. **Ms. Bellout** (Algeria) said that the international community must redouble its efforts and allocate adequate resources to implement global initiatives to promote inclusive development and the well-being of humanity, including, in particular, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, she called on the Organization to devote particular attention to the needs of Africa, and to complement the work of the African Union, which had recently adopted the African Union Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth, by stepping up its efforts to combat extreme poverty, disease and the negative repercussions of natural disasters and global crises.

10. Since 2000, Algeria had placed social development at the core of its national development policies and plans, including those it had formulated with a view to combating poverty, creating decent job opportunities for all, revitalizing rural areas, attracting investment and improving the country's infrastructure. To achieve sustainable development, high growth rates and full employment, Algeria was seeking not only to reduce levels of extreme poverty but to eradicate that phenomenon entirely, while also upholding the principles of non-violence and respect for human rights. To that end, Algeria had established a number of national bodies and programmes that provided financial assistance and social services to the heads of poor households and individuals who were unable to work, as well as to persons with disabilities and older persons. Algeria had also adopted a national plan to strengthen social solidarity, particularly among marginalized groups, by supporting the development of productive family networks, as well as policies to promote economic diversification, and was striving to uphold the principle of equality of opportunity, particularly for young people, women and persons with disabilities.

11. In closing, she underscored that Algeria would continue to work with its partners in the region and beyond with a view to designing and implementing development initiatives that made use of innovative technologies.

12. **Mr. Wu** Haitao (China) said that the international community should give greater priority to poverty eradication, employment and social integration, the three social development issues at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. To that end, Member States must establish appropriate operational mechanisms to implement the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and expedite the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in areas such as poverty eradication, education, health and employment.

13. In line with the principle of people-centred development, countries must establish universal and sustainable social protection systems designed on the basis of objective evidence and underpinned by rationalized funding structures, with a view to achieving full employment and decent work for all, including vulnerable groups. Efforts must also be made to bolster innovation and connectivity by advancing structural reform, developing new modalities of growth and promoting the construction of infrastructure in order to stay apace of prevailing social and historical trends.

14. In order to develop awareness of a shared future for humanity and to rectify the emerging imbalance between North and South, initiatives should be undertaken to maintain the status of North-South cooperation as the main channel for development cooperation, with South-South cooperation playing a critical complementary role. In that regard, developed countries should continue to assist developing countries by honouring their official development assistance commitments.

15. China had a highly developed social protection system comprising a pension system, in which 888 million residents in urban and rural areas had been enrolled at the end of 2016, and a basic medical insurance system, which had covered 1.3 billion people at the end of that year, equivalent to 95 per cent of the population. His Government was also working to achieve innovative, coordinated and eco-friendly development and to promote mass entrepreneurship and innovation. In line with its commitment to eradicating poverty in the developing world, China would contribute 400 billion yuan, over the next three years, for livelihood projects to be undertaken by developing countries and international organizations participating in the Government's Belt and Road Initiative, which focused on promoting development in more than 60 countries and regions along the Silk Road Economic Belt between Europe and Asia. His Government would also collaborate with African countries in following up on the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and in advancing the 10 major plans to boost cooperation between China and Africa in order to support implementation of the Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda.

16. **Ms. Phipps** (United States of America) said that, because youth were affected by all aspects of development, Member States must consider the impact of their decisions on young people and seek to include them in efforts to address development challenges.

17. Bullying, in particular through social media platforms, had a disproportionate impact on youth and put them at increased risk of mental health problems, substance abuse, exploitation, violent or self-destructive behaviour, and suicide. Youth were often among the most severely affected by social challenges, which made it critical for all members of society to cultivate the values of empathy and communication in order to ensure that young people became good stewards of the world that they would inherit. To that end, strengthening families was particularly important, and better support must be provided to children growing up without their biological families, including those living in foster homes or refugee camps. In that regard, Member States should exchange best practices in developing policies to protect vulnerable youth. Youth with greater access to opportunities should harness the potential of the unprecedented tools and technologies at their disposal in order to identify solutions to the challenges faced by their less fortunate counterparts, in particular those affected by multigenerational poverty, war and conflict.

18. **Ms. Flanagan** (Ireland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, against a global backdrop of armed conflict and political unrest that undermined the rule of law and the protection of human rights, the youth of Ireland called on the international community to be steadfast in its commitment to peace and human rights and to reject the hostile forces that contributed to the large-scale loss of human life. Approximately 22.5 million refugees, over half of whom were under the age of 18, had been forcibly displaced as a result of conflict and persecution, and States had turned away refugees at their borders, in violation of customary international law. The international community must endeavour to combat the populist rhetoric that fuelled discrimination against such groups and hindered the achievement of peace.

19. Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals and the principles enshrined in United Nations human rights treaties, young people had a key role to play in building a brighter future. To that end, Governments must recognize the inherent potential of all youth, including young women, ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities; reduce inequality by ensuring that youth received a high-level education that equipped them with marketable skills; and respect the right to health of young people, including their access to mental, sexual and reproductive health services. States must also strive to eradicate homelessness, poverty and inequality, including by adopting a progressive and responsible tax model with a zero-tolerance policy towards tax abuse.

20. **Mr. Dockery** (Ireland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda must be intensified as a matter of priority. As young people would be most profoundly affected by a failure to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations and national Governments must ensure that they played a central role in implementing, monitoring and reviewing the 2030 Agenda. In particular, Governments must include them in decision-making processes; grant them the right to vote and to fair and equal employment; provide them with an education in global citizenship; and ensure that they

inherited a physical environment that did not hinder the opportunities of current and future generations.

21. Young women and girls must be empowered to participate in politics and hold public office in order to ensure that public bodies reflected the composition of the populations they served, without discrimination on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity or religion. Indeed, only 20 women had addressed the General Assembly in the general debate of the current session, a trend that must be reversed. As Chair of the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Ireland urged Member States to consider whether, in their respective national contexts, women were granted the same rights and participated in society on equal footing with men, in particular whether they were afforded equal access to education, employment and health care and had the ability to choose their spouse. Efforts must also be made address the needs of other vulnerable groups, including members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community.

22. **Mr. Cortorreal** (Dominican Republic) said that his Government was seeking to eradicate poverty and overcome inequality by strengthening public policies. Investments in education, health care and youth employment were pillars of the national effort to break the cycle of poverty. In that connection, the Government had implemented a programme that had resulted in the creation of thousands of jobs for, and significant improvement in the lives of, persons living in rural areas, while reducing poverty indicators.

23. Sharing the same vision and objectives as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the National Development Strategy of the Dominican Republic sought to secure the full inclusion of the most vulnerable segments of the population. His Government welcomed the appointment of the Secretary-General's new Envoy on Youth and looked forward to working closely with her Office. The national Ministry of Youth had launched a number of programmes aimed at ensuring the comprehensive development of young people by promoting their participation in society as global citizens and fostering a culture of entrepreneurship, inclusion and equity. It had also developed a programme that focused on providing guidance to youth facing a broad range of social challenges and was seeking to include youth in decision-making processes.

24. His Government attached high priority to education, with particular attention to student learning processes, teacher training, management of education centres, and the administration of programmes aimed at supporting persons with disabilities. In addition, public policies were in place to protect older persons and enable them to lead an active and productive lifestyle. The Integrated National System for Older Persons recognized that the State, the family and the community were jointly responsible for protecting the dignity and promoting the development of older persons. Public prosecutors' offices had also been established to deal with cases of elder abuse. Notwithstanding the significant progress made, urgent efforts must be undertaken to adopt a legally binding international instrument for the promotion of the human rights of older persons. His delegation welcomed the appointment of the Secretary-General's new Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility.

25. **Ms. Bergman** (Sweden), speaking as a youth delegate, said that Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) was a critical tool for involving youth in efforts to strengthen peace in conflict-affected areas and in all nations seeking to eliminate xenophobia, structural racism, homophobia, gun violence and human suffering. She called on the international community to address the shrinking space and resources allocated for engagement with civil society, including by increasing youth participation, which was critical to the strengthening of democracy. Efforts must be made to create an inclusive and enabling environment for all young people, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, disability status, sexuality, citizenship or religion, in particular by ensuring their access to welfare systems and free education and by combating prejudice.

26. The age-old scourge of inequality continued to be fuelled by gender-based violence. While she was proud of her country's feminist Government, she urged all Member States to step up their efforts to put an end to gender-based violence and discrimination, particularly in conflict situations. In addition, the wide-ranging effects of climate change — including flooding, which destroyed schools and compromised access to education; extreme heat, which affected access to water and endangered health and lives; and storms, which destroyed homes, hospitals and infrastructure — disproportionately affected vulnerable groups and must be addressed as a matter of priority.

27. **Mr. Bultrikov** (Kazakhstan) said that, notwithstanding the limited resources available for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, Member States must continue their efforts to combat extreme poverty and rising inequality and disparities of power within and among countries; reduce gender inequality and youth unemployment; respond to humanitarian crises and massive forced displacements; and promote macroeconomic and social development.

28. The 2030 Agenda represented a paradigm shift that would require enormous resources: it had been proposed, at the seventieth session of the General Assembly, that States should allocate 1 per cent of their annual defence budgets to a special United Nations fund for sustainable development. At the same time, policymaking should be democratic and participatory and ensure the protection of the most vulnerable. To that end, supportive, transparent and accountable public institutions were needed to combat discrimination and social exclusion and ensure rigorous monitoring and assessment of sectors at risk. Despite the global economic situation, Kazakhstan had increased annually its funding of programmes for children, youth, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities. The national Kazakhstan 2050 strategy and the associated economic policy would guarantee improvements in education, healthcare, social housing and social security and seek to modernize and develop the labour market and the information and technology sectors. Under that strategy, youth had access to free formal education at all levels, as well as vocational training and microloans, and 10,000 Kazakh students had graduated from top-ranking universities abroad thanks to a presidential scholarship programme.

29. Disability must be given global recognition as a human rights issue. In implementing the 2030 Agenda, his Government sought to ensure that persons with disabilities could participate in decisions affecting their lives and seek redress for violations of their rights, to which end it had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; enacted a law on the social protection of persons with disabilities; and a adopted national action plan for 2012–2018 aimed at opening up new horizons for persons with disabilities. In order to eliminate poverty among such persons, the Government had established a three-tiered social security system comprising basic and supplementary pension schemes. Moreover, in 2018, under its programme to promote employment for persons with disabilities, the Government would subsidize jobs for such persons and introduce a mandated quota system.

30. The Government promoted the concept of active ageing to ensure that the elderly, who accounted for 10 per cent of the population, enjoyed their rights without discrimination. In addition, it had offered to host a regional hub of the United Nations in Almaty to promote sustainable development, facilitate humanitarian assistance and build resilience nationally and regionally in Central Asia.

31. **Ms. Geissel** (Germany), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, over the past six months, she had spoken to many German youth about the work and values of the United Nations, as well as their hopes and fears for the future. While many of them had grown up in a peaceful and secure environment in which respect for human rights and freedoms was guaranteed, they were frightened at the possible outbreak of wars during their lifetimes, owing to the rise of right-wing populism in Europe; the growing number of weapons and increase in militarization worldwide; and the abandonment of diplomacy in favour of displays of military strength. In order to preserve peace and security, the international community must strive to return to a political culture of dialogue and cooperation, an endeavour in which youth had a critical role to play, as recognized in Security Council resolution 2250 (2015). She called on Member States to make progress towards disarmament, including by banning nuclear weapons and strengthening arms control, in order to ensure a more secure future and prevent terrorism.

32. **Mr. Kuschick** (Germany), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the positive atmosphere that had characterized the multilateral events for youth in which he had participated over the past six months inspired confidence for the future of mutual cooperation and for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Many of the youth he had encountered had fled to Europe from areas affected by conflict and terrorism, having undergone torture and lost close family members, but, like European youth, nurtured hopes for a peaceful future. The host societies that welcomed such refugees must appreciate the challenges they faced in adapting to their new environments and, more broadly, must value the diverse contributions and talents of all members of society, regardless of their race, sexual orientation and gender identity.

33. **Ms. Pansa** (Suriname), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, in order to advance social development, efforts must be made to improve access to high-quality education, in particular by investing in early learning initiatives. Governments must provide individuals with the opportunity to fulfil their potential by continuously improving the quality of education through academic accreditation, diversification of learning opportunities, and training of instructors; and by broadening the age range for compulsory school attendance to cover children between the ages of 4 and 16. While school attendance was currently compulsory for children in Suriname between the ages of 7 and 12, most children started school at the age of 4, and a draft law had recently been introduced that would raise the requirement to age 16.

34. **Mr. Koniki** (Suriname), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the incidence of sexual violence

against youth in his country could be partly attributed to the conflicting social messages conveyed to boys and girls with regard to sexual activity. While girls were taught to resist sexual advances from boys, boys were simply taught not to impregnate girls, a lesson that implied permission to pursue girls without regard for their personal and physical boundaries, which, in turn, contributed to sexual violence. Sexual education programmes aimed at young men and boys would therefore be essential for increasing awareness and shifting mentalities with respect to the unequal treatment of boys and girls. Parems and caregivers must also be educated on the issues of sexual and reproductive health and violence against women and girls. Youth had a critical role to play in advancing such change, in particular by refusing to condone or excuse sexual violence.

35. **Ms. Matar** (United Arab Emirates) said that her Government wished to express its deepest condolences for the terrorist attack in Las Vegas and reaffirmed its condemnation of violence and terrorism of all kinds. Speaking on behalf of her country's youth delegates, she said that young Emiratis wanted to be partners in development but were often excluded from decision-making. Nevertheless, considerable progress had been made in the area of youth development. For example, a young woman had been appointed Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and youth councils and forums had also been organized to empower the young.

36. At the international level, the United Arab Emirates had undertaken many youth-related initiatives in 2017, including launching a new Arab youth centre and distributing grants for young people in the Arab region. Furthermore, its delegation to the General Assembly once again included youth delegates. The delegation welcomed the appointment of the most recent Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and would work with its partners in the Committee to present its concerns and views about youth empowerment and employment.

37. **Ms. Pavković** (Serbia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that her country had established a ministry of youth and was implementing a practical and attainable national youth strategy. In addition to being the 2019 European Youth Capital, it was working to provide housing, health care and education for many of the thousands of young migrants within its borders. Serbia, along with five other Western Balkan States, had established the Regional Youth Cooperation Office to promote reconciliation and cooperation among youth in the Balkans.

38. If allowed, young people could and would contribute to the future of their countries, including to attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Youth representatives should therefore be included in national working groups on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All too often, the needs and demands of young people were not addressed.

39. *Ms. Al-Temimi (Qatar), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

40. **Mr. Mendoza-García** (Costa Rica) said that his country's laws, policies and programmes were designed to ensure the well-being of all, with emphasis on the most vulnerable. In view of the many dimensions of poverty, it had been using a multidimensional poverty index since 2015 to target, evaluate and refine national social policies. It also had programmes providing the most vulnerable groups with access to information and communication technologies.

41. To build cohesive, resilient societies, it was essential to promote citizen participation and social inclusion, including by ensuring quality formal and informal education, which could also help to reduce the growing ranks of the young unemployed. Breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and inequality also required investment in health and in protecting young people from violence. With respect to women, gender violence and wage and opportunity inequality were barriers to true social development. To promote labour market equality, Costa Rica was participating in the Gender Equality Seal programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It was also encouraging the recognition and redistribution of unpaid labour and caregiving and reorganizing its caregiving network to make it easier for women to work.

42. **Mr. Uğurluoğlu** (Turkey) said that Turkey's tenth development plan (2014–2018) took a multidimensional approach that was yielding many positive results, particularly in regard to access to education and health care. His Government's rights-based approach to development promoted the inclusion of all. It aimed to provide access to basic services and decision-making for disabled people; to address the rights and needs of the elderly; to empower women and ensure gender equality and to provide quality education and decent employment opportunities for the young.

43. However, the unprecedented migrant and refugee flows had a direct impact on Turkey's social development agenda. It hosted the largest refugee population in the world, including many school-age children, and it was continuing to provide for their

humanitarian, health and education needs. Syrians had even been given temporary access to the Turkish labour market. Nevertheless, greater international cooperation and meaningful burden- and responsibility-sharing were imperative.

44. **Ms. Sandoval** (Nicaragua) said that, as a framework for achieving a just world order, the 2030 Agenda represented one of the most important achievements in the history of the United Nations. At the international level, Nicaragua remained committed to the Millennium Development and Sustainable Development Goals and to achieving peace through negotiation and dialogue. Domestically, its efforts to restore economic, social and cultural rights had yielded substantial improvements in gender equality, investment, development and security, and it had set targets for the delivery of titles to land as well as for water and sanitation, telecommunications, health, the environment, job creation, education and housing.

45. To promote the inclusion of disabled people, it provided priority administrative processing and transport benefits and had published a special community outreach booklet. Older people had a right to a pension and to recreation, and steps had been taken to improve their health care and include them in socio-productive programmes. The 2015 Family Code recognized the central role of the family in development and social change.

46. **Ms. Covei** and **Mr. Măcelaru** (Romania), speaking as youth delegates, said that for young people to effect meaningful change, they must be empowered. Countries should educate young people to speak their minds and then listen to them. Young Romanians wanted to be taken seriously by those in power.

47. Young people also wanted an education focused on critical thinking and skills acquisition that would prepare them for the job market. Outdated, information retention-based education systems were one cause of youth unemployment, which led to youth apathy and disenfranchisement. Furthermore, poor children generally did not receive the extra help they needed to succeed in school and escape poverty.

48. Young members of vulnerable groups such as girls, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth, ethnic minorities and disabled people should be made aware of their rights, so that they could overcome discrimination and exercise decisional autonomy.

49. **Ms. Horbachova** (Ukraine) said that, despite ongoing challenges, her country was working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It was rebuilding its economy and infrastructure and had been able to increase its share in the European market very substantially under the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. It had cleaned up its banking system, cut public spending and initiated cooperation with the International Monetary Fund, and it was finally making inroads on corruption. Ukraine had also recently instituted a reform to improve health care quality and extend basic coverage to all, and it continued to promote gender equality. In March, it had strengthened a 2014 law protecting rights and facilitating humanitarian assistance for the almost 2 million people internally displaced by Russia's occupation of Crimea and aggression in the Donbas region. However, normal conditions could not be re-established without ending Russian military aggression and restoring full Ukrainian sovereignty.

50. **Ms. Pwint Phyu Thinn** (Myanmar) said that her country emphasized support for young people, the elderly and the disabled. Publicly subsidized voluntary primary night schools and youth centres had been opened. Furthermore, her Government was developing a youth policy and had submitted an updated child rights law to the national legislature for approval. Recognizing the importance of young people as agents of change, the State Counsellor had taken part in "peace talks" with young people earlier that year. Because of their power to effect change, youth delegates should participate in more international forums.

51. Myanmar had adopted a plan of action on older persons in June 2014 and had enacted a law on older persons in 2016. In addition to adopting a law domesticating the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2015, it had taken steps to assist persons with hearing impairment by introducing sign language interpreter training and sign language services and making arrangements to ensure their social participation, and it had also opened schools for the visually impaired. Moreover, it was conducting programmes to raise awareness of disability-based discrimination, neglect and violence and encouraging employers to hire the disabled.

52. **Mr. Itegboje** (Nigeria) said that his country's social protection programme was an integral part of its development agenda. One of its major components was the conditional cash transfer scheme. To improve the standard of living, Nigeria had recently launched a low-interest housing loan programme. It also offered interest- and collateral-free loans to grass-roots-level entrepreneurs. It was empowering youth by providing skills training and employment opportunities, and its locally sourced school meals programme was the largest of its kind in Africa. In the federal civil service,

2 per cent of vacancies were reserved for persons with disabilities, and a disabled person had been appointed to assist the president on disability matters. Although enactment of a national policy on ageing was still pending, Nigeria had begun implementing policies to empower and protect the aged and combat elderly poverty.

53. **Mr. Mohamed** (Maldives) said that inclusivity was the cornerstone of his country's social development policies. To tap the potential of young people, who constituted almost half of the population, it provided universal health care, free primary and secondary education and sports and recreational and enrichment opportunities, and it also emphasized jobs for young people, youth leadership and youth entrepreneurship. As dictated by the Constitution and law, the Government had established mechanisms to ensure equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, introduced a disability allowance, and it was setting an example for the private sector by providing employment opportunities for the disabled in state-owned enterprises and public agencies. Gender equality in the workplace was protected under the Gender Equality Act of 2016, and the State was closing in on its mandatory target of 30 per cent women on the boards of state-owned enterprises. In addition, a number of recent laws provided the legal foundation for eliminating gender-based violence and harassment.

54. **Ms. AlZouman** (Kuwait) said that her Government agreed on the importance of strengthening youth governmental institutions. It welcomed the renewed attention of various countries to encouraging youth civic participation and volunteer work and had launched a number of initiatives to encourage youth volunteerism. To promote the social integration of disabled people, Kuwait had established a public authority for disabled affairs and provided protection, medical, cultural and psychological services for them, as well as education and training. It was also making every effort to ensure that they had decent employment. Older people could receive monthly stipends, housing and legal services and did not pay fees for public services. In accordance with its constitutional obligation to protect and strengthen the family, the State gave financial assistance to needy families, and it had established centres within the family courts to settle domestic disputes and counsel the parties. It was also reviewing its domestic violence laws with a view to preserving the dignity of family members who had been subjected to violence.

55. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that social investment was the linchpin of Venezuelan public policy and the Constitution of 1999. With its focus on health care, education, culture, housing and food, his Government's 2013–2017 development plan accorded with and complemented the Sustainable Development Goals and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. Thanks to a series of social programmes, his country had made rapid strides in eliminating poverty and extreme poverty, equalizing income distribution and providing decent housing. Indeed, it now ranked in the high human development category of the human development index.

56. Even in the face of attacks on its currency, coercive unilateral financial and economic embargoes and threats of intervention, his country would continue to invest in social programmes for the most vulnerable and to strive to build bridges of diplomacy and dialogue. Unity and cooperation among the countries of the South was more important than ever in order to leverage payment of the social debt. The United Nations had an immediate duty to promote effective poverty eradication polices, sustainable financing and a people-centred new international order.

57. **Mr. Amir Hamzah** (Malaysia) said that, in recognition of the critical importance of youth participation in economic development, his Government pursued a national youth development policy focused on empowerment, human resource development, entrepreneurship and, more recently, leadership and volunteerism. It was also providing a platform for young people to participate in discussions on issues that affected them, such as cost of living, productivity and unemployment, and to help to set future policy.

58. Despite progress on tackling poverty, growing inequalities pointed to a need for social protection. As recently announced, Malaysia intended to collaborate with developed and developing countries, multilateral institutions and the private sector to improve its transfer of knowledge and skills to other countries. As the Secretary-General mentioned in his report on cooperatives in social development (A/72/159), agricultural growth and rural development were critical to the eradication of poverty. Cooperatives, including cooperative financial assistance, could contribute to such development, as could skills training. Malaysia was committed to the well-being of its people, irrespective of differences and vulnerabilities, and would continue to work to create a consensus and policy prescriptions on social development.

59. **Mr. Dumklang** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Thai youth delegates wished to highlight three groups of people who must not be left

behind in development: youth, older persons, and migrants. As fast learners who naturally embraced diversity and had the courage to take action against inequality and injustice, young people were ideal agents of change. In that connection, the youth delegates were eager to share their experiences and knowledge of Thailand's inclusive, moderate, people-centred development model, the "sufficient economy philosophy". With regard to older persons, they supported efforts to foster intergenerational solidarity, which was encouraged in Thailand through activities for passing on traditional and cultural knowledge.

60. **Ms. Chittrawat** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that Thai young people recognized of the contribution of migrants to Thailand's social and economic development. Young people around the world could be the bridge of understanding between their societies and migrants. Information technology and social media could also be used to shape public perceptions and encourage social harmony and a culture of acceptance. The youth delegates urged the United Nations to continue providing platforms for young people to express themselves and to do the same for other groups whose voices were seldom heard.

61. **Mr. Rombouts** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that a good education included not only instruction in academic subjects but also social, cultural and sports-related activities. To improve the quality of education, all school boards should consider bringing students into their decision-making processes. In its resolution 2250 (2015), the Security Council had acknowledged the positive role that young people could play in peacebuilding, opening the door to their participation in a vast range of related fields. It was now widely recognized that youth participation could lead to better outcomes.

62. **Ms. Keita** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, unfortunately, a young person's socioeconomic background remained the strongest determinant of academic success. A child's ability to succeed in school should not be limited by the parents' level of education, migrant status or economic means or by the child's skin colour, religion, mother tongue, health or gender.

63. **Ms. Mukhtar** (Sudan) said that her country's national poverty reduction strategy included creation of employment for young men and women, establishment of a fund to finance educated young entrepreneurs, expansion of basic and higher education and eradication of illiteracy. The Zakat Chamber funded social services and food security and played a leading role in supporting academic and health care facilities and promoting programmes to encourage cooperatives.

64. In view of the importance of political stability for prosperity and social security, Sudan was implementing the final recommendations of the comprehensive national dialogue. The recommended measures would promote social development, especially since they benefited the most vulnerable populations.

65. Stronger international cooperation was needed to fulfil international commitments to social development. The debts of developing countries were stumbling blocks for social development and should be cancelled.

66. **Mr. Najem** (Bahrain) said that young people, who comprised almost 60 per cent of the population of the Middle East and some 48 per cent of the population of Bahrain, had tremendous potential to promote development and facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In cooperation with UNDP, his country had therefore formulated a national youth strategy to address the needs of young people, and to uphold their right to participate fully in decision making processes and in initiatives to promote inclusive development. His country's Government Action Plan for the period 2015 to 2018 also addressed the needs of young people in Bahrain.

67. The King Hamad Youth Empowerment Award to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, launched in January 2017, would encourage young people to participate in efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda and reflected Bahrain's support for all initiatives fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Bahrain moreover, believed it was crucial to involve all sectors of society, including young people, in States' efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

68. Bahrain had hosted a number of conferences to encourage young people to participate in development initiatives, including the ninth International Youth Conference, held in Manama in April 2017, which had focused, in particular, on the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. That conference and had been attended by more than one thousand young people as well as representatives of international organizations, governments and civil society organizations.

69. In line with the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030, and to promote the development of Bahrain's private sector and position it as the key driver of the country's economic development, Bahrain had established the Tamkeen organization, which, inter alia, provided skills training and guidance to young people to

facilitate their entry into the labour market. Tamkeen also implemented projects to strengthen the role of women in Bahraini society, encourage entrepreneurship and address the economic challenges impeding the establishment and growth of Bahraini business enterprises.

70. In November 2016, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) had presented an award to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, in recognition of the success of the Bahraini version of a UNIDO programme that promoted the economic empowerment of young people and women. In the light of its success, UNIDO had, to date, used the Bahraini version of the programme as model when launching similar initiatives in 48 other countries.

71. **Mr. Shava** (Zimbabwe) said that his country's participation in the voluntary national reviews of the high-level political forum on sustainable development demonstrated its commitment to social development. Sustainable development was at the core of its economic development plan, which was based on four national priorities: food security, poverty eradication, infrastructure and value addition. To combat rural poverty, it had implemented a command agriculture scheme for maize which had resulted in a bumper harvest and was already being extended to other crops.

72. **Ms. Fofana** (Burkina Faso) said that, under the decree domesticating the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Burkina Faso had conducted a census of disabled children in 2013. The most recent economic and social development plan emphasized support for vulnerable and marginalized groups. Burkina Faso had instituted concrete measures to assist them, including vocational training and basic social services for disabled persons, comprehensive assistance for many orphans and vulnerable children, a national programme to assist street children, a law on the protection and promotion of older persons and a comprehensive women's empowerment programme. By 2020, it hoped to increase the percentage of working disabled persons to 50 per cent, provide support for a larger number of vulnerable children and eliminate the phenomenon of street children.

73. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal) said that the least developed countries, particularly landlocked and island States, were more vulnerable to climate change, extremism, forced migration and food and energy crises. Every effort should be made to ensure that their graduation from the least developed category was both smooth and sustainable.

74. As a country with more than 125 languages and ethnic groups, Nepal depended on being able to turn diversity into unity and national strength and was guided in all development policies, programmes and plans by its inclusive, rights-based 2015 Constitution. By law, women were guaranteed 33 per cent representation in the national legislature and 40 per cent representation in local government, and hiring quotas had been set for marginalized groups in the civil service. Special measures were also in place for the promotion of members of such groups. Despite scarce resources, Nepal's social protection system embraced older people, single women, disadvantaged ethnic and indigenous groups and disabled people, and it was committed to ensuring free compulsory education for all children. However, in view of its landlocked status, legacy of internal conflict, geographic complexity and vulnerability to climate change, Nepal was concerned about the sustainability of its remarkable progress in social development.

75. **Ms. Sukkar** (Jordan) said that the Arab region was facing unprecedented instabilities, conflicts and waves of migrants and displaced persons — challenges that could not be overcome without global cooperation for peace and security. The influx of Syrian refugees and the protracted nature of the regional crises had pushed Jordan to its limits and affected all aspects of Jordanian life. Nevertheless, it was moving forward on its 10-year socioeconomic blueprint for achieving a prosperous, resilient, and inclusive economy whilst deepening reforms and inclusion. Together with Norway, it had recently co-chaired a meeting on youth, peace and security. It had also launched the Champions of Youth group of countries, and with Norway, the Group of Friends of Preventing Violent Extremism. Its new law on persons with disabilities introduced the concept of informed consent, took a comprehensive approach to violence and required the Government to present a national action plan on deinstitutionalization within 10 years. Jordan remained steadfast in its commitment to enabling and expanding the contributions of older people to families, communities and society at large.

76. To achieve shared prosperity, the burden of social development must be more evenly distributed. Jordan was determined to safeguard its development achievements whilst remaining an inclusive, resilient safe-haven and oasis of stability.

77. **Mr. Gebru** (Ethiopia) said that his country was implementing a strategy aimed at conserving natural resources and reducing the effects of climate change. Its Growth and Transformation Plan 2015–2020 emphasized education and training, health care, science

and technology, capacity-building and good governance, public participation, democracy- and national consensus-building, issues relating to women, children and youth, social welfare and labour issues and environmental protection. It had taken concrete steps to promote the full participation of disabled people in all spheres of life and had enacted a national plan on older persons in line with the Madrid Plan of Action. While youth volunteerism had increased significantly, youth employment remained a challenge. In response, the Government had set up a revolving fund dedicated to youth employment creation and was creating industrial parks to encourage the growth of manufacturing and small- and medium-sized enterprises, which were major sources of employment. Lastly, to ensure more inclusive growth, it had established a safety net programme that benefited millions of people in need.

78. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Azerbaijan) said that the benefits of Azerbaijan's fast growing economy had been distributed across the population through the construction of schools, hospitals and health centres as well as homes for internally displaced persons. By 2020, Azerbaijan aimed to reduce the poverty rate from 5 to 4 per cent and to improve the quality and coverage of the health care system. Since 2010, it had been considered a country with high human development.

79. The Government was accelerating its efforts to diversify the economy by creating industrial parks in the regions, increasing spending on agriculture and rural economic activities, generating durable, decent employment and granting low-interest loans to entrepreneurs. Regarding older people, a new state social protection programme had been developed for the 2017-2021 period, and the retirement age had recently been raised to 65 in view of increased life expectancy. Under the national action plan on protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, disabled children could now be schooled at home.

80. **Ms. Grigoryan** (Armenia), noting that more than 22,000 displaced persons had sought protection in Armenia in recent years, said that her Government attached great importance to their integration and settlement and was grateful for the support of international institutions and diaspora organizations in that regard.

81. In partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund and UNDP, Azerbaijan was moving from a medical model of disability assessment to a rights-based model that included applicant self-assessment. In line with its emphasis on youth development, it had launched a number of initiatives to provide more innovative, higher quality education.

82. However, despite notable progress, Azerbaijan still faced many challenges for social development, including external challenges: unilateral coercive measures, a land blockade and closed borders. Regional and subregional confidence-building measures should be used promote social development in conflict situations and could become part of wider regional peace, security and reconciliation efforts.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/72/SR.4

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Chair: Mr. Idris (Vice-Chair) ..... (Eritrea)

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In the absence of Mr. Gunnarsson (Iceland), Mr. Idris (Eritrea), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 27: Social development (*continued*) (A/72/169)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/72/158 and A/72/211)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/72/159, A/72/161, A/72/166, A/72/189 and A/72/190)

1. **Mr. Moussa** (Djibouti) said that his Government prioritized social development to ensure greater prosperity and social cohesion. A number of measures had been implemented to protect and support young people in their transition to adulthood and facilitate their social and economic inclusion on an equal basis. Moreover, existing measures were being expanded to ensure that all young people had access to formal and vocational education, regardless of their education background, so as to acquire the necessary skills for their social and professional integration. Young people participated in the implementation of social policies at various levels. In February 2017, youth, youth organizations, civil society, government representatives and other partners had participated in an event to outline a clear strategy for the development of programmes that targeted the needs of young people.

2. Social protection policies and extended social safety nets were key strategies to reducing poverty. The national social protection policy, implemented in 2013, contained measures to directly support purchasing power and household revenue for the poorest individuals working in the informal sector. As a result, there had been improvements in productivity, productive capacity and early childhood development within those households. Given that the majority of the population was not formally covered by the social security system, the Government was working to better target households in need and coordinate assistance programmes. In addition, the Government had established a housing policy framework, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, to strengthen tenure security and ensure access to decent housing. In response to the recurring drought, clear strategies were being developed to strengthen all forms of resilience. Programmes for food security and social safety nets targeting the poorest individuals had actively contributed to reducing vulnerability and ensuring sustainable development. The Government recognized that the family was the main contributor to social development.

3. **Ms. Khaled** (Bangladesh) said that the international community must evaluate the progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and follow up on its commitments pursuant to the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. In that regard, the Government of Bangladesh had continued to prioritize the empowerment of its people in its development plan with a view to eradicating poverty. Robust economic growth had been complemented by improvements in several social indicators. The Government had implemented social protection systems to address exclusion, poverty and inequality, and social development programmes had been aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. As a result, the number of people living below the poverty line had been reduced by almost 80 per cent since the 1990s, to 12.9 per cent.

4. The national development strategy focused on addressing inequality through social security, decent work and financial inclusion. Over 13 per cent of the national budget, 2.3 per cent of gross domestic product, was allocated to social safety net spending. Significant investments were being made in human resources development, especially for youth, in order to take advantage of the demographic dividend and promote digitalization. The strategy was being aligned to 20 youth-specific targets in the Sustainable Development Goals in an effort to provide quality education and training, reduce unemployment, promote social awareness and ensure sustainable livelihoods.

5. By 2050, Bangladesh would be facing the challenges of an ageing population. In anticipation, the Government had embraced the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. With consideration for the well-being of the ageing population, it had implemented social safety net programmes and increased the age of retirement from 57 to 59. The rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities were also a priority, and measures had been taken to ensure that persons with disabilities were respected and enjoyed full participation, equal rights and opportunities. Disability had been mainstreamed in development policies and programmes.

6. **Mr. Ben Mejdoub** (Morocco), speaking as a youth delegate, said that youth in Morocco were eager to be

involved in the development of the country. Morocco had called for the active involvement of youth in the work of the General Assembly and honoured its commitment by including young people in its official delegation, thereby acknowledging the key role that they played in society, the economy and politics, as well as their impact on decision-making. Governments, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector must work together to guarantee a favourable environment for youth development, including equal opportunities, better access to quality education and higher standards of living.

7. **Ms. Mehadji** (Morocco), speaking as a youth delegate, said that poverty and economic disparities, both within and among States, intolerance and a lack of cultural diversity undermined implementation of the 2030 Agenda. As agents of social evolution who could contribute greatly to development, young people should be at the centre of every national development project. In Morocco, the Government had established social and educational institutions and training centres for young people, sports facilities, libraries and spaces dedicated to new technologies. Additionally, a national human development initiative had been launched in 2005 to promote the well-being of vulnerable groups, including youth. The national youth strategy 2015-2030 targeted strategic goals for youth development in partnership with three national youth institutions, and the Union of Young African Parliamentarians had been created in 2014 to encourage youth involvement in building a strong Africa.

8. **Ms. Rixhon** (Luxembourg), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people had been compelled to stand up for their future in the face of global events, such as rising populism and the vote by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. While young people largely rejected the future proposed by extremists, some could find answers to their frustrations in radical ideologies that corrupted religions and cultures. Luxembourg and other States members of the European Union had too long believed that those issues did not apply to them. However, the majority of recent terrorist attacks within the European Union had not been committed by foreign nationals or refugees, but rather by young marginalized Europeans who had been neglected by society. Youth under the age of 30 represented half of the world population. The international community must therefore empower them through intergenerational dialogue, which would require a multilateral response.

9. **Mr. Lohr** (Luxembourg), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, while the United Nations and other international organizations recognized the transformative impact of youth in society, some States had not yet done so. Despite making up half of the global population, young people were too often marginalized, and two thirds of States did not consult youth on poverty reduction strategies or national development plans. States must therefore challenge their way of thinking and encourage youth participation in order to further development, peace and conflict prevention. It was essential for young people to enjoy a political space in which they could participate and express themselves. Those who felt marginalized or excluded from society were targeted by terrorist groups and often found refuge in radical ideologies that offered a sense of social inclusion. Nearly half of the population of Luxembourg was made up of foreign nationals who coexisted in harmony, enriched the culture and contributed to the economy. The international community must face the challenges of multiculturalism and pluralistic societies in a similar spirit and translate ideas into action.

10. **Mr. Ulvr** and **Ms. Sykorova** (Czechia), speaking as youth delegates, said that, as members of the first generation of young people who had been born into a free, democratic Czech Republic, they felt obliged to continue in the tradition of those who had fought for their freedoms and to build on their society's respect for human rights. The international community must create a space that would enable young people to express their opinions without the bias of ageism; provide young women with more opportunities for political engagement; and allow access to quality, inclusive education, practical training and paid internships for all in an environment of acknowledgement and respect for the contributions of young people. The systematic involvement of youth, youth organizations and civil society was essential to sustainable development. Young people must therefore be included in decision-making processes and the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development strategies. Additional efforts should be made to encourage the participation of vulnerable and marginalized youth groups. As for the General Assembly resolution on youth, it should be ambitious and serve as a basis for policies to promote measures such as school and youth parliaments, youth boards and councils, participatory budgeting and co-management practices with a view to teaching young people about democracy.

11. **Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) said that his Government prioritized reducing poverty and combating social exclusion, especially for vulnerable groups. Burundi had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in 2014 and had drafted a national policy to guide its implementation within an inclusive sustainable development

framework. Additionally, a bill currently before Parliament proposed regulations governing the treatment of persons with disabilities.

12. Despite its limited resources, the Government had always protected vulnerable groups and had signed the relevant national, regional and international instruments. In addition, it had implemented a social protection policy to mainstream their needs within the 2025 development plan and the strategic framework for growth and poverty reduction, which were based on the principle of equitable sustainable development. Youth participation, in particular, was essential to the sustainable development of Burundi, as youth under the age of 25 years constituted more than half of the population. The President therefore intended to create a youth investment bank with a view to promoting creativity and entrepreneurship.

13. Furthermore, primary school enrolment had nearly reached gender parity owing to an initiative that provided free primary education as a means of eliminating obstacles for girls. A measure to provide free health care for women giving birth and children under the age of five had also produced significant results. Despite those achievements, much remained to be done. The Government required assistance from its partners to overcome the challenges relating to dropout rates for girls, increased violence against women and girls, poverty among vulnerable groups and youth unemployment. Regrettably, the unjust and unilateral sanctions imposed on Burundi had harmful consequences on the people, especially vulnerable groups.

14. **Mr. Douti** (Togo) said that all new national development policies and strategies prioritized social development. Following the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, Togo had begun to draft a development plan that was consistent with the national strategy for accelerated growth and employment promotion. The plan sought to improve well-being; increase productivity and competitiveness in growing sectors; strengthen infrastructure to support growth; promote sustainable management of land, the environment and the living environment; and strengthen governance and peacebuilding. A community development emergency programme had been launched in 2016 with financial and technical support from the United Nations Development Programme. It was designed to significantly improve living conditions in areas that received little or no basic socioeconomic services while providing an opportunity to promote peace and social stability in Togo.

15. Youth employment and entrepreneurship were also priorities for sustainable socioeconomic development. The Government had established several programmes and operational frameworks to benefit young people through job creation, support for economic initiatives, basic development, volunteerism and employment in promising sectors. In addition, the national inclusive finance fund allowed vulnerable groups to access interest-free loans to undertake income-generating activities, thereby sustainably improving basic living conditions. The new national health development plan, which was aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, sought to promote effective governance in health care and pharmaceutical production. Furthermore, significant reforms in agriculture had generated decent employment for youth under the national programme for food security and agricultural investment. They had also contributed to reducing malnutrition by one third between 2012 and 2015. The Government was committed to promoting the construction of decent, accessible and affordable housing and planned to construct 5,000 homes for low-income households per year until 2020. Between 2011 and 2015, the poverty rate had dropped from 58.7 per cent to 55.1 per cent, and access to basic social services had considerably improved.

16. **Mr. Almabruk** (Libya) said that the inequality between developing States and rich States had had a negative impact on economic development. Despite optimistic forecasts, growth rates had remained low, and financing programmes were insufficient. Developing countries required aid to build the necessary infrastructure in productive sectors in order to promote job creation and reduce income inequality. In Libya, which was undergoing a period of transition, the current political insecurity and instability had severely hindered development. Despite those challenges, efforts were made to enforce laws for the protection of families, children and the elderly, and to provide social security assistance for education, decent housing and health care. In an effort to overcome inequality, the salary of Government employees had been increased. Furthermore, educational opportunities and school supplies were provided for the children of displaced persons. The Government encouraged youth participation in development and had established an institution to support the reintegration of veterans. However, many challenges remained, especially in the provision of health care.

17. **Ms. Halvorsen** (Denmark), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Sustainable Development Goals could be viewed as a contract between generations, reflecting the world that young people should see in

2030. Young people must therefore be active participants in the development process. In Denmark, the national strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian action prioritized youth. The number of youth delegates had been increased, a global youth advisor position had been created in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the grant to the Danish youth council had been increased.

18. States must incorporate youth issues across existing development agendas rather than employ a silo approach. To that end, the Danish youth council could serve as an example. Through the council, Danish youth organizations undertook development cooperation initiatives to create partnerships with international youth organizations in order to design, implement and evaluate development projects. For example, Danish medical students were working with their peers in Uganda to promote awareness on non-communicable diseases; Danish scouts were working in Tunisia to strengthen democracy; and a Danish political youth group was partnering with a non-governmental youth organization in Zimbabwe to promote peace. Those types of partnerships created strong and responsible young people. Rather than being seen as the problem, young people must be consulted and involved in development so that they could be part of the solution.

19. **Ms. Klein** (Madagascar) said that social development, specifically poverty reduction, was prioritized in the national development programme. In 2015, the Government had established a social protection programme to improve living conditions, especially for vulnerable groups, which included retirement plans, insurance plans, pension funds, access to basic social services and social assistance benefits for the poor.

20. Madagascar was committed to the African Union roadmap on harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth and was also making efforts to support youth in the context of the International Organization of la Francophonie. Young people represented 61 per cent of the Malagasy population and were at the centre of government efforts to promote youth employment, health and education. A strong and ambitious national youth policy had been adopted in 2016. With assistance from the United Nations Population Fund and other partners, the Government had implemented significant measures to assist youth in gaining access to information, services and training regarding family planning, HIV/AIDS and education. The sexual and reproductive health of young people and the high prevalence of early pregnancies and marriage were also major challenges for Madagascar. A law had been adopted in June 2017 to provide universal access to family planning, and a sex education programme had been introduced in schools. To combat youth unemployment, a national policy for employment, technical education and vocational training had been implemented, under which the Association of Malagasy Economic Stakeholders had adopted a youth entrepreneurial strategy.

21. In 2015, Madagascar had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and had taken steps to ensure that persons with disabilities could exercise their rights to education and health services. The Government had conducted a population and housing census in 2017, which was an important step in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as an understanding of the real needs of the population was essential to combating poverty and promoting development.

22. **Mr. Zambrana** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that, despite the commitments made by States under various international instruments to combat inequality, promote social progress and increase the standard of living for all, social gaps were growing quickly. In Bolivia, however, programmes introduced in recent years by the Government of President Evo Morales had supported development and reduced poverty. The social and economic development plan 2016-2020, along with the 2030 Agenda, focused on extreme poverty eradication, universal access to basic social services and sovereignty over natural resources. The Government had nationalized the hydrocarbon sector and used oil revenues to build roads, schools, hospitals, sports centres and other facilities. In addition, recent public policies had focused on reducing inequalities, especially for vulnerable groups. As a result, 1.6 million people had been lifted out of extreme poverty between 2005 and 2016. Furthermore, the Government had invested 117.5 million bolivianos in programmes to guarantee the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. In 2014, it had adopted a new code for the protection of children and youth based on international instruments as well as an analysis of the challenges facing the country's children.

23. The international community had just 13 years to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. If it truly wished to resolve the challenges of socioeconomic inequality and represent the interests of the people, it must recognize access to basic services as a human right; acknowledge the rights of Mother Earth; and combat capitalism, colonialism and imperialism.

24. **Mr. Cassidy** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that shared prosperity, through an inclusive and equitable distribution of the benefits of economic

growth, was essential to poverty reduction. The absence of decent work opportunities for the billions of people struggling to survive was a root cause of many challenges, including migration, trade and action on climate change, as well as preparing youth for the future. In the long term, the international community must make greater concerted efforts to address the drag on social and economic development, which included growing inequalities, widespread stagnation in wages, continued high unemployment in many States, the lack of protection for workers in a growing informal economy and the marginalization of people through social exclusion. The ability of States to provide decent work for all was affected by changes in the world of work, driven largely by structural economic shifts, the changing nature of production and employment, technological progress, the impacts of climate change and new sociopolitical and demographic trends. States must therefore prepare for a new future of work in which economic growth went hand in hand with social progress.

25. In anticipation of those challenges, ILO had formed a number of partnerships to bring together the expertise and experience of a wide range of stakeholders. In September 2017, it had established a high-level Global Commission on the Future of Work to undertake an in-depth examination of the future of work that would provide the analytical basis for social justice initiatives in the twenty-first century. Well-designed social protection systems, when properly implemented, could enhance human capital and productivity, eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and contribute to establishing social peace. Universal coverage and access to social protection was therefore essential. In 2016, ILO and the World Bank had launched the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection. ILO looked forward to engaging with Member States in partnerships driven by better research and statistics, which would be crucial in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

26. **Ms. Likina** (Russian Federation) said that her delegation was compelled to respond to the statements made by the representative of Georgia at the second meeting of the Committee and by the representative of Ukraine at the third meeting. It was highly regrettable that the present forum had been used to advance fabricated claims against the Russian Federation that were a gross distortion of events. Those statements were clearly an attempt to deny responsibility for the decisions made by the Governments of Georgia and Ukraine, which had played a fateful role in the lives of thousands and had had tragic repercussions. She called upon those representatives to avoid deliberately politicizing the matter in future.

27. **Mr. Tumasyan** (Georgia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Russian Federation persisted in its policy of violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia by breaching the United Nations Charter, the norms and principles of international law, the 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement and all Security Council resolutions pertaining to Georgia. In 2008, the Russian Federation had carried out open military aggression against Georgia and committed ethnic cleansing. It continued to occupy 20 per cent of the territory of Georgia, and its violations were duly documented by international organizations. The Russian Federation must begin to fulfil its obligations under international law and the 2008 ceasefire agreement and allow internally displaced persons and refugees to return safely to their places of origin.

28. **Ms. Horbachova** (Ukraine) said that the scale of internationally wrongful acts and offences committed by the Russian Federation demonstrated a blatant breach of its obligations under international law, in particular the Hague and Geneva Conventions, United Nations treaties and General Assembly resolutions 68/262 and 71/205. The latter had recognized the Russian Federation as an occupying Power.

29. Up to 60,000 former Crimean residents had been internally displaced to the mainland of Ukraine. Moreover, education in the Ukrainian language was facing a dire situation in Crimea. Between 2013 and 2017, the number of students receiving instruction in Ukrainian had dropped dramatically, from almost 13,000 to 370, and Ukrainian had been removed as a language of instruction in universities. Those restrictions continued, despite the order issued on 19 April 2017 by the International Court of Justice, which had concluded unanimously that the Russian Federation must ensure the viability of education in Ukrainian.

30. Since the occupation had begun in 2014, the mortality rate on the Crimean Peninsula had increased constantly, at an average of 13 per cent, while it had declined in other regions of Ukraine. That fact was well known to Russian occupation authorities, who, nevertheless, continued to transform Crimea from a tourist destination into a massive military base, causing harm to both the environment and the social situation.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/72/SR.5

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Chair:	Ms. Kaszás (Vice-Chair)	(Hungary)
later:	Mr. Gunnarsson	(Iceland)
later:	Ms. Kaszás (Vice-Chair)	(Hungary)

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17-17449 (E)

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In the absence of Mr. Gunnarsson (Iceland), Ms. Kaszás (Hungary), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 107: Crime prevention and criminal justice (A/72/125 and A/72/91)

Agenda item 108: International drug control (A/72/225)

1. **Mr. Lemahieu** (Director of Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), speaking via video link, said that UNODC had consolidated and strengthened its responses to the enormous challenges of drugs, organized crime, corruption and terrorism over the previous year. It had worked closely with United Nations partners and civil society to assist Member States in the implementation of the recommendations of the outcome document adopted at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, held in April 2016. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs had agreed at its sixtieth session on a follow-up process based on the seven thematic areas outlined in the outcome document and had adopted a resolution on preparations for 2019, the target date set in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

2. Since the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, UNODC had worked closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) to offer drug treatment, care and rehabilitation services to twenty-three countries. The Office had also provided gender-responsive and human rights-based HIV prevention and treatment for drug users in communities and prisons and was currently active in over 60 ports worldwide, having enlarged its joint container control programme with the World Customs Organization.

3. UNODC was tackling the links between drugs and other crimes by carrying out asset recovery measures, running innovative cryptocurrency training courses and building cooperation among partners and Member States. Its Global SMART Programme supported research and analysis into new psychoactive substances and amphetamine-type stimulants. It also continued to provide information on illicit crops in Asia and Latin America and, in its flagship publication, the World Drug Report, on trends and movements in illicit drugs. Efforts to convince farmers of illicit crops to embrace alternative development programmes were ongoing in Afghanistan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia, Laos, Myanmar and Peru. Cooperation and coordination could be strengthened if Member States assumed common and shared responsibility for the world drug problem.

4. UNODC had continued to contribute to progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies. The 2030 Agenda recognized the connections between sustainable development and drugs and crime. UNODC was working with Member States to understand the nature of threats which they faced, so as to address them within the context of the Goals. One key challenge was the related nature of threats, such as the connection between migrant smuggling and human trafficking; terrorism and trafficking in cultural property; and the disturbing overall relationship between terrorists and criminals. UNODC had helped the Security Council and the General Assembly to appreciate those links and worked hard to connect the need to tackle terrorism and crime with overall efforts to achieve peace and development. The 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants recognized the value of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols on migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons. The high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons also acknowledged that conflict and economic uncertainty were drivers of such crimes.

5. It was the duty of UNODC to ensure the full implementation of protocols, protect victims and uphold justice and the rule of law. It had provided support to anti-corruption efforts in forty countries over the previous year. In November 2017, it would hold the seventh session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which would send a powerful message about full implementation of the Convention and its direct connection to the promotion of sustainable development.

6. UNODC was making progress in its initiative to combat foreign terrorist fighters and was helping countries to deal with violent extremism in prisons and elsewhere. It had also enhanced its partnerships with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and the Office of Counter-Terrorism. With regard to criminal justice responses, UNODC was mandated to support effective, fair and humane criminal justice systems by protecting the rights of defendants and supporting the interests of victims and witnesses. It was attempting to stamp out violence against women and young girls and building youth resilience to crime by addressing vulnerabilities in the development of

young people and helping them to prevent choices that lead to crime and substance abuse.

7. UNODC also addressed new and emerging crimes. Its Global Maritime Crime Programme advocated prison reform, cracking down on increasing levels of piracy off the coast of Somalia and fighting heroin trafficking at sea. It had also made significant accomplishments in the Sahel Programme and in programmes to combat cybercrime, particularly child exploitation and ransomware; trafficking in cultural property; and environmental crime.

8. The Office took accountability seriously and its independent evaluation function helped to improve its activities, encourage the sharing of best practices and build trust with Member States. At the direction of the Executive Director, UNODC had taken steps to improve gender equality among its staff.

9. Extrabudgetary funding had increased by 300 per cent in the previous decade, which indicated a vote of confidence by Member States. Given that trust, UNODC was always seeking to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its financial and programme management practices. However, stable funding for core staff and activities was a small and declining part of the budget. Unearmarked contributions had fallen precipitously and general purpose funding was predicted to make up less than one percent of the total income of UNODC in 2017. Regular budget allocations accounted for less than 1 per cent of the total United Nations regular budget and made up only 7 percent of the entire budget for the Office. It was therefore difficult to sustain a number of country and regional offices crucial for implementing the numerous mandates of UNODC. An increase in regular budget resources, general purpose contributions and other "soft" earmarked funding would ensure that the Office could manage core activities and initiatives, conduct research, set standards and respond to emerging challenges.

10. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that his delegation was pleased that the intersessional meetings of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had incorporated some of the best practices of the special session, such as promoting the participation of civil society, international organizations and academia.

11. The alignment of the international drugs policy with the 2030 Agenda was certainly crucial. The World Drug Report 2016 included useful best practices for cooperation between Member States and emphasized the need to collect disaggregated data and tailor innovative responses to specific population groups. He advocated adopting such as approaches systematically rather than as one-off measures.

12. He asked what efforts UNODC had made to encourage relevant United Nations bodies to identify and commence implementing recommendations made in the outcome document of the special session that fell under their area of specialization, as recommended in General Assembly resolution 71/211.

13. **Mr. Lemahieu** (Director of Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, UNODC) said that Member States' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and fulfil the recommendations of the outcome document of the special session were closely linked. UNODC had been very active in supporting such efforts, not least by becoming custodian of over 50 indicators monitoring progress towards the 2030 Agenda, in coordination with the United Nations Statistical Commission. The Secretary-General had shown a keen interest in work on drugs and crime by issuing a decision entrusting UNODC to ensure that other United Nations agencies were participating in global efforts. The attendance of many such bodies in the intersessional meetings of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs was a sign of their increased involvement.

14. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that CARICOM member States faced significant challenges to achieving sustainable development because of the immediate and significant threat of transnational organized crime, especially trafficking in drugs and persons, the illegal trade in small arms and ammunition, and money laundering. The highly indebted small island States in the region were compelled to divert resources from vital development activities, such as education, health care and infrastructure development, to combatting crime.

15. In early 2017, Heads of Government of CARICOM member States had reaffirmed their commitment to combatting transnational organized crime and reducing its impact on the region under the CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy. In line with the Strategy, CARICOM had expanded its advance passenger information system; established an advance cargo information system; finalized a regional counter-terrorism strategy; and continued to work on a maritime and airspace security cooperation agreement. CARICOM, which had greatly benefited from international collaboration in all its achievements, called on its development partners to expand information sharing, capacity building and technical assistance. Successful partnerships would make the region safer and its borders more secure, thereby

fostering an enabling environment for investment, economic growth and development.

16. The world drug problem was a common and shared responsibility that required a comprehensive and multifaceted response. CARICOM was committed to the implementation of an integrated, balanced and effective drug control strategy based on strengthened international cooperation across the seven thematic areas reflected in the outcome document of the special session. Since it was important to broaden participation and engagement in the wake of the special meeting, CARICOM welcomed the webcasting of the intersessional meetings of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in September and hoped that subsequent meetings would also be made available online.

17. Illicit drug use and trafficking could not be overcome without a global, well-coordinated and strategic plan. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs should give early consideration to the follow-up to the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, which had thus far guided collective actions in keeping with the aims of the three main international drugs conventions. It was vital to examine the trajectory of the new strategy and ensure that it would provide leeway for policies to be crafted which were tailored to national situations.

18. CARICOM emphasized the need for broad coordination and collaboration among United Nations agencies engaged in actions related to the world drug problem. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs might be the United Nations policymaking body with primary responsibility for drug control, but regional and international organizations, international financial institutions, civil society and the private and public sectors all played a critical role in shaping a full and effective response. While mandates should be respected, the drug control policy must be people-centred, considerate of human rights and public health considerations, and address illicit activities related to drug trafficking and drug use. UNODC, in particular, must be provided with adequate, predictable and stable resources to enable it to undertake the activities within its mandate, especially in its role of supporting Member States' capacity-building requirements and cooperating with regional bodies.

19. *Mr. Gunnarsson (Iceland) took the Chair.*

20. **Mr. Teo** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN was committed to working with the international community to combat transnational crime and, over the past five decades, had stood steadfast in its commitment to ensure that its region was safe from the threats of transnational crime, terrorism and drugs. At the eleventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, ASEAN had consolidated and renewed its commitment to combating transnational crime. The ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime encouraged a cohesive regional strategy to prevent, control and neutralize transnational crimes. At the thirty-seventh Conference of the ASEAN Association of Heads of Police, the improved database system of the Association, which would improve connectivity and the flow of information among ASEAN law enforcement agencies, had been noted as an innovation in fighting crime.

21. In response to the threat of terrorism in the region, ASEAN had adopted the revised ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter-Terrorism and the Manila Declaration to Counter the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism in September 2017. The ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children had entered into force in 2017, supplemented by the ASEAN Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which provided specific action plans to guide member States in the effective implementation of the Convention. At the eleventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, the cross-sectoral Bohol Trafficking in Persons Workplan had been developed to harmonize all ASEAN programmes relating to trafficking in persons and efforts across ASEAN sectoral bodies and organs to implement the Convention.

22. With the rise of digital literacy and the increase in Internet connectivity in South-East Asia, the threats posed by cybercrime had intensified. Recognizing the importance of securing a safer cyberspace, ASEAN had established a working group on cybercrime in 2014. In March 2017, it had adopted the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy with a view to enhancing the capacity of ASEAN to address cyberthreats. At the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity in 2017, a round table meeting had been convened to bring together prosecutors to discuss cybercrime and share best practices and the ASEAN Declaration to Prevent and Combat Cybercrime had been endorsed. In April 2017, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) had led an operation targeting cybercriminals in the region, which had resulted in the successful identification and taking down of more than 9,000 malware-hosting servers and hundreds of compromised websites.

23. In the face of the rise in methamphetamine production in Asia, as noted in the UNODC World Drug Report 2017, ASEAN countries remained united

in their zero-tolerance approach to drugs. In 2016, ASEAN had adopted its Workplan on Securing Communities against Illicit Drugs for the period 2016–2025 and had made steady progress towards achieving its vision of a drug-free ASEAN community. In 2017, ASEAN had launched a cooperation plan to tackle illicit drug production and trafficking in the Golden Triangle to stem the flow of narcotics from the region.

24. ASEAN strongly supported the centrality of the three international drug control conventions, which remained relevant and would continue to serve as the cornerstone of global drug policy. ASEAN pledged its continued support to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and looked forward to continuing its cooperation with the United Nations, in particular with UNODC, to share best practices and find effective strategies to eradicate illicit drugs and international crime.

25. ASEAN had made strides towards building an integrated, peaceful and safe community. The ASEAN Community Vision 2025, which was complementary to the 2030 Agenda, demonstrated the region's commitment to leave no one behind. As it worked to achieve that vision, ASEAN would continue to work closely as a community to keep its people and region safe and enable its citizens to live full lives without fear of terrorism, transnational crimes or drugs.

26. **Mr. Whiteley** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, the country of the stabilization and association process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, said that transnational organized crime continued to pose a serious threat to human security, democratic governance, socioeconomic development, the rule of law, and peace and security worldwide. Cross-border threats could be countered only through effective judicial and law enforcement cooperation between States and regional organizations. It was currently more urgent than ever to examine how law enforcement cooperation could be developed to fight against organized crime.

27. The European Union reaffirmed the importance of the Organized Crime Convention and its Protocols in combating existing and emerging forms of transnational organized crime and called on all States to implement them in full. Such instruments were also of growing relevance in countering migrant smugglers and protecting migrants against human trafficking. The European Union appreciated the political support and substantial number of ratifications of the Convention and called on all remaining States which had not yet signed, ratified or implemented them to do so as soon as possible. He also welcomed the continuing process to establish a review mechanism.

28. The links between transnational organized crime and international terrorism had been evident for some time. It was vital to actively counter all sources, techniques and channels of terrorist financing and to implement Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) on terrorism financing and Financial Action Task Force standards worldwide. Connections between terrorism and transnational organized crime must be dismantled.

29. Law enforcement action could no longer rely solely on the traditional reactive model. While States parties to the Convention were responsible for countering modern criminal threats on their own territory, they must also contribute to transnational efforts. Global policies should not allow any loopholes for modern-day criminality. Member States should therefore harmonize the definition of money laundering and related sanctions, extend legislation on cash controls to include cash shipped by freight or post and improve mutual recognition of criminal asset freezing and confiscation orders.

30. Europe and its neighbours continued to face a significant migration influx. Operations in the Mediterranean Sea had neutralized smugglers' vessels in full compliance with international law, including respect for human rights and safety at sea. The European Union called on Member States to spare no effort to eradicate human trafficking, including by implementing the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children; applying related standards and legal frameworks; working closely with UNODC; and remaining mindful of commitments under the New York Declaration for Migrants and Refugees. Children, women and girls were especially vulnerable and deserved special protection. He called for the widest possible application of the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the Organized Crime Convention, through a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and cross-border approach by countries of origin, transit and destination.

31. The European Union welcomed the inclusion in the 2030 Agenda of targets aimed at significantly reducing illicit financial and arms flows, strengthening the recovery and return of stolen assets and combating all forms of organized crime. The European Union and its Member States remained the largest contributor to

the funding of UNODC; they appreciated its valuable assistance in combating organized crime.

32. The European Union kept drug trafficking high on its agenda and took note of the pace at which new psychoactive substances were appearing, the role of the Internet, including the dark web, in the drug trade and drug-related crime, the use of the financial proceeds from drugs for terrorist purposes and the abuse of migrants for drug trafficking. A balanced and comprehensive approach to the world drug problem was the right way forward. The outcome document of the special session addressed both the supply and the demand side of the drug problem, on the basis of scientific evidence and facts, and not bias or social stigma. It also took into account human rights, gender and youth issues. The European Union and its member States would continue to promote the outcome document as a pivotal reference document, to work on its implementation and to use it as a basis for national policies and international cooperation. The European Union would not allow the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action to be replaced by an instrument that did not entail the full and proper implementation of the recommendations made during the special session.

33. The European Union supported the pivotal role of the United Nations in the development of measures to fight international crime in all its forms. It would continue to oppose as a matter of principle the use of the death penalty, including for drug-related crime.

34. **Mr. Saito** (Japan) said that his country had strengthened its response to sexual offenses by expanding the definition of rape in the penal code, increasing minimum sentences, and removing provisions that required submission of a formal complaint in order for prosecution to proceed.

35. Japan had ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. In 2020, the country would host the Fourteenth United Nations Crime Congress under the theme of "Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: Towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

36. Trafficking in persons was one of the most urgent issues before the international community. Japan welcomed the recent high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the Appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. As Security Council resolution 2331 (2016) had highlighted, terrorist groups engaged in human trafficking to raise funds and recruit members. The international community was jointly responsible for eliminating that threat.

37. **Mr. Aboulatta** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the Group continued to work towards reducing crime levels and had made progress in pursuing regional approaches to international criminal justice and applying regional and international conventions. African States had shown resolve in settling conflicts within their borders and continued to improve on important benchmarks of good governance, the rule of law and constitutional order. Many African States found it challenging to deal with crime effectively due to their vast, porous borders, coastlines, poorly regulated airfields, weakened governance infrastructure and limited law enforcement capacity.

38. The adoption by the African Union of the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children and the Migration Policy Framework for Africa, as well as the launch of the African Union Commission Initiative Against Trafficking campaign, the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation and the Khartoum Process had resulted in more convictions of traffickers and the protection of a greater number of victims. Nevertheless, human trafficking and smuggling of migrants remained a challenge for Africa. Activities should be launched with the international community to ensure close cooperation, information sharing and joint operations, in order to afford migrants, refugees and asylum seekers more protection. The African Group remained committed to the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and welcomed the adoption of the political declaration on its implementation. The Group called on the international community to continue its support and contributions to the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

39. As African States were deeply affected by terrorism, the Group commended the scaling up of UNODC support to African countries through training courses on terrorist financing and on the prosecution and adjudication of terrorist cases; the freeze, seizure and confiscation of terrorist assets; the detection and disruption of illicit flows used to finance terrorism; and the strengthening of regional and international cooperation among Member States. He called on the international community to continue its support for such activities.

40. Drug trafficking and related offences also jeopardized security, health and the socioeconomic conditions in Africa. Cannabis cultivation and

trafficking was a cause of concern, especially in rural areas. High levels of income inequality and urbanization, a lack of criminal justice resources, and war and civil conflicts had exacerbated the situation. The African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013–2017), adopted at the fifth Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Drug Control, proposed a balanced and integrated approach to drug control based on the three international drug conventions. The Plan of Action created synergies with existing African Union Commission initiatives addressing organized crime, such as the 2011–2015 strategy of the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption, the 2006 Ouagadougou Action Plan, the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy, the African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Algiers Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa and with the task force for the universal and effective implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Despite national and international cooperation to support the implementation of the Plan of Action in recent years, production, trafficking and use of illicit drugs were a growing challenge. Through collaboration with UNODC, Member States had established or were establishing national programmes to combat drug trafficking, drug use and associated transnational organized crime. The continent had supported a common position on the issue during the special session.

41. In September 2017, the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies had held their twenty-seventh meeting in Egypt, at which recommendations had been adopted on countering money laundering and illicit financial flows; enhancing coordination of regional communication platforms between drug law enforcement agencies; regulating trafficking in new psychoactive substances, including khat and tramadol; and coordinating law enforcement responses. The recommendations would be submitted to the sixty-first session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

42. The African Group reiterated its support for the extension of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action beyond 2019. The Political Declaration and the outcome document of the special session complemented each other by encompassing the commitments contained in the three international drug conventions.

43. The Group highlighted the urgent need to respond to the serious challenges posed by the increasing connections between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including trafficking in persons, trafficking in firearms, cybercrime, terrorism and money-laundering, and called on the international community to strengthen its resolve to address those challenges by adopting appropriate and sustainable policies.

44. **Mr. Lee Huan Ting** (Singapore) said that Singapore, given its close proximity to the Golden Triangle and its position as a transport hub, was at the forefront of the struggle against drugs as both a transit and a destination country and therefore believed in a drug-free society, not a drug-tolerant one. It had taken a comprehensive, balanced, sustained and tough approach to tackling drug supply and demand and adopted a comprehensive harm prevention strategy to address law and order issues, social problems and the impact of drugs on public health. The approach had brought about a steady decline in drug abusers. In 2016, the number had decreased by 3 per cent compared with 2015, and drug abusers currently comprised less than 0.1 per cent of the population. Nevertheless, young persons below the age of 30 had comprised two-thirds of new abusers in 2016.

45. Addressing a global problem required a global effort. Singapore therefore strongly supported the centrality of the three international drug control conventions, which served as the cornerstone of global drug policy. At the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, consensus had been reached on operational recommendations to guide all countries in the fight against the drug problem. All States should work hard to actively implement the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

46. At the national level, Singapore had launched, in 2016, its National Cybercrime Action Plan outlining four key principles, namely, educating the public to stay safe in cyberspace, enhancing capacity to combat cybercrime, strengthening legislation and stepping up international partnerships. At the regional level, Singapore, as the ASEAN Voluntary Lead Shepherd on Cybercrime, was responsible for facilitating ASEAN initiatives against cybercrime, including the cybercrime workshops of ASEAN plus China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. At the international level, Singapore had partnered with INTERPOL through the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation to work on operational collaboration and capacity-building to help countries to confront the increasingly sophisticated challenges of cybercrime. Singapore was an active participant in international processes, had acceded to

key United Nations conventions on transnational crime and was continuously strengthening its cooperation with international law enforcement agencies.

47. **Ms. Abdelkawy** (Egypt) said that international cooperation was important for severing the links between terrorism and transnational organized crime, such as money-laundering and trafficking in persons, arms and drugs, as well as newer phenomena such as trafficking in cultural property. The Government had taken a number of steps to protect its cultural heritage, including the introduction of stricter penalties for the smuggling of cultural artefacts.

48. Egypt had launched a national strategy to combat human trafficking that had been drafted with input from the relevant State agencies and civil society organizations. In 2016, a law had been enacted to fight illegal migration and the smuggling of migrants that imposed punitive sanctions on offenders. Furthermore, Egypt had joined the "Aware Migrant" campaign, spearheaded by Italy and the International Organization for Migration, which raised awareness among African migrants on the exploitive practices of migrant smuggling rings.

49. Egypt believed that a clear vision was needed for the period following the 2019 expiration of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, especially as its objectives had not been achieved. Egypt therefore supported the extension of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action in order to avoid a gap in the system for confronting the global drug problem.

50. It was important to continue and strengthen the efforts of UNODC to provide States with technical support. Funding sources for UNODC should be diversified, and Egypt therefore called on donor States to provide general funding that was not allocated to specific activities or programmes.

51. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea** (Mexico) said that the 2016 special session had marked a watershed moment in international drug policy and that the outcome document reflected a balanced and renewed vision involving the participation of all United Nations bodies. In the context of efforts to reform the United Nations system and boost the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, bodies would need to have clearer mandates and work together more closely. Whereas many crime prevention plans in the past had failed or been counterproductive, the new vision offered by the special session and the 2030 Agenda was the best option for achieving peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

52. In the annual omnibus resolution on drug policy, Mexico would draw attention to progress in the implementation of the outcome document; emphasize the link between the special session and the 2030 Agenda; strengthen the focus on gender and human rights; advocate enhanced measurement and collection of information for drug-related statistics; support joint initiatives by the Statistical Commission, the WHO and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs; and advocate the strengthening of linkages with civil society, academia and regional organizations.

53. In Mexico, the criminal justice system had been recalibrated to mainstream respect for human rights and the pro persona principle. Multilateral initiatives were needed, however, to counter corruption, illicit financial flows and trafficking in firearms and ensure effective and efficient coordination of the efforts of international and regional bodies. To that end, Mexico would be organizing an international conference in early 2018 with the directors of Government bodies responsible for combating trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The international community had failed to address the problems associated with small arms and light weapons with the necessary rigour.

54. **Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) said that combating transnational organized crime and associated offenses was a priority for Peru. Although every case should be considered on its own merits, there were advantages to drawing up joint comprehensive strategies in relation to certain criminal activities which hindered the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Any such approach should take into account relevant international instruments, such as the Organized Crime Convention, the United Nations Convention against Corruption and international conventions related to drugs; focus on preventing information technology tools from falling into the hands of criminals; enhance information exchange and cooperation mechanisms at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels; and utilize the support of United Nations bodies, especially UNODC. The three international drug conventions and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs were instrumental to the achievement of the goals established in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

55. Peru had drawn up a national anti-drug strategy for the period 2017–2021 which was holistic, multidisciplinary, sustainable and balanced. To reduce supply and improve control of the legal sale of the coca leaf for traditional and industrial purposes, the Government had strengthened the capacity of its anti-drug intelligence forces to break up criminal organizations and penalize trafficking in drugs and chemical agents, money laundering and associated

offences. The Peruvian model of sustainable development centred on socioeconomic alternatives for populations which cultivated coca, with due regard for land usage, interculturality, human rights and gender. Peru also worked with civil society organizations to carry out anti-drug campaigns and services in families, schools and communities. In addition, it had expanded therapy programmes for specific population groups, including juvenile offenders and prison inmates.

56. **Ms. Al Nussairy** (Iraq) said that Iraq was committed to tackling organized crime in all its forms, which included confronting terrorism and the terrorist groups that targeted the peace and security of civilians, particularly Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Legislation to eliminate terrorism and cut off funding to terrorist groups must adhere to human rights principles, and to that end, Iraq had enacted the Law No. 13 of 2005 on Anti-terrorism and Law No. 28 of 2012 Combating Trafficking in Persons.

57. In an effort to deter corruption, Iraq had established the Commission on Integrity, which reported to the parliament. Iraq had confronted the problems posed by illicit drugs by enacting Law No. 50 of 2017, which provided medical care to drug users and addressed the trafficking of illicit substances. In an initiative to promote tolerance and facilitate the social reintegration of criminal offenders, Iraq had enacted an amnesty law in 2016. Furthermore, Iraq had acceded to the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2007 and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2009.

58. Iraq wished to pay tribute to the efforts of the United Nations to combat organized crime. It welcomed Security Council resolution 2379 (2017) and considered it a triumph for humanity and for Iraqi victims of terrorism. It also appreciated the efforts made by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and by UNODC, which had provided technical support and capacity building to Iraqi officials and law enforcement.

59. **Mr. Aljabr** (Saudi Arabia) said that crime hindered development and undermined the rule of law. Criminal justice systems must be established on firm bases in order to confront the challenges posed by social, cultural and economic changes that had led to an increase in transnational crimes. His delegation saw a need for reliable data on crime and a monitoring mechanism that would allow Member States to follow up on the progress made towards achievement of the Goals.

60. Saudi Arabia had established a system of specialized courts, including civil, commercial and labour courts. Saudi Arabia strove towards swift and comprehensive justice as a pillar of development and had granted the public prosecutor complete independence of the executive authority. The Government stressed the importance of sharing expertise around the treatment of prisoners and had provided them with rehabilitation and social reintegration services. The Mohammed Bin Naif Counselling and Care Centre had developed an interactive approach to rehabilitation that aimed at promoting moderation, uprooting extremism and preventing the spread of deviant ideas. The Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology, established in Riyadh in May 2017, combatted extremism in the media and on the Internet and promoted coexistence and tolerance.

61. Based on its Islamic conviction that all substances that endangered human life must be prohibited, Saudi Arabia made every effort to combat the use of illicit drugs. Harsh penalties must be imposed on those guilty of dealing and smuggling drugs. Saudi Arabia had taken proactive steps and had made recourse to international cooperation to ensure that drugs would not enter the country.

62. **Ms. Mejía Vélez** (Colombia) said that Colombia had the moral authority to declare that the world had failed in its decades-long fight to stem trafficking in drugs. The 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action was set to expire in 2019 and its goals of achieving a world free of drug abuse had proven unachievable. Parties should thus accept that the concept of launching a war on drugs had failed and that Member States should no longer follow the same goals as those set out in the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961.

63. The forthcoming ministerial meeting to be held in Vienna in 2017 should be considered as a new start. The outcome document of the General Assembly special session was a good starting point for constructing new policies centred on individuals, their freedoms and rights, with the same ultimate goal as the three main drug control conventions: the maintenance of health and well-being. In the search for intelligent solutions, it was crucial for the United Nations to promote open debate and discuss all options for resolving the serious issues caused by drugs and drug control policies.

64. **Mr. Yesod** (Israel) said that the aim of drug policies and programmes in Israel was to keep young people safe and promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. Israel provided formal and informal education programmes and training on making smart life choices,

and made interventions when necessary. It had developed unique treatment and recovery services tailored for young people. Parents and significant adults were integrated into those activities, and special units had been formed of parent volunteers who helped young people to cope with risky behaviour.

65. Israel combated drug abuse through a comprehensive and balanced approach, in compliance with the three international conventions and with full respect for human rights. Incorporating human rights into the fight against drugs was imperative to its success. The Israeli criminal justice system therefore employed alternatives to incarceration, such as treatment programmes, public service or fines. Thanks to the adoption of legislation and effective prevention measures to address the new psychoactive substances phenomenon, the perception of risk was high and levels of use had lowered. In contrast, the very low perception of risk was a key factor in the increase in cannabis use in the country. The Government was therefore developing a new reform to decriminalize cannabis use for first-time offenders, who would instead pay a fine that would be used to fund treatment, initiatives and drug education.

66. Treatment services were designed to meet diverse needs, including those of women, young people, comorbidity patients and ex-convicts. A focus on rehabilitation was imperative to reintegration into society. Patients in treatment centres, including opioid substitution maintenance therapy centres, were therefore provided with vocational courses, assistance in writing curricula vitae and preparing for job interviews, and information on rehabilitation-friendly employers.

67. **Mr. Estrada Meyer** (Brazil) said that, in a world that was increasingly interconnected and interdependent, crime operated without any regard for borders, and the international community must find ways to improve its response to that challenge. In order to efficiently fight all forms of transnational crime, its underlying causes must be addressed. Effective strategies for countering crime should have preventive policies as central elements. Brazil reaffirmed its commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which helped to strengthen the synergy between efforts to promote development, protect human rights and fight crime. In order to enhance the consistency and coherence of crime prevention policies in the United Nations system, the commitments recently made by Member States, such as in the Political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, should be mainstreamed into the relevant resolutions of the Committee.

68. Brazil had approved a law against organized crime, in 2013, and a law against trafficking in persons, in 2016. Congress had recently approved a new law on migration that would establish clear channels for regular and orderly migration, which were the most effective tools to prevent the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons. Another high priority for Brazil was preventing and combating corruption, and the high-profile investigations and convictions in recent years were testament to its genuine commitment to tackling the issue.

69. Brazil reaffirmed its commitment to following up and implementing the recommendations of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. Human rights norms and standards were an indispensable part of the international legal framework for the design and implementation of drug policies. The right to life, including the prohibition of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and the right to health were two of the many human rights that were often violated by drug policies. Efforts should continue to further mainstream human rights considerations into the global response to the world drug problem. Those elements must be brought into the debates that would set the stage for the forthcoming review, in 2019, of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

70. **Mr. Idris** (Eritrea) said that, in the light of the threat posed by transnational crime in the region, Eritrea welcomed the launch of the UNODC Regional Programme for Eastern Africa for the period 2016–2021. Eritrea was committed to playing its part in combating transnational crime and promoting the rule of law in the region. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto could play a vital role in facilitating regional and international cooperation through the exchange of good practices and information and the provision of mutual legal assistance and technical support.

71. In the region, many people, especially young people, continued to be victims of trafficking as they attempted to migrate to Europe and the Gulf. His Government had for years been calling for an independent international body to investigate human trafficking in the Horn of Africa with the aim of bringing those responsible to justice and had expressed its commitment to cooperate and provide information to such a body. Its repeated requests to the Secretary-General and the Security Council to initiate such an

investigation, however, remained unheeded. Greater international effort was needed to ensure that no case of human trafficking went unprosecuted. The global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration must emphasize the need for further cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination to eradicate the crimes of the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, including by holding criminals to account wherever they resided.

72. The low crime rate in Eritrea could be attributed to the rich customary norms of Eritrean society, according to which any form of criminal behaviour was actively abhorred, and to Government strategies to reduce vulnerability to crime and victimization. In the past decade, crime had been further reduced. The modest success of Eritrea in crime prevention was due to its national development strategy, its advocacy strategy that aimed to inculcate a culture of integrity, civic service, equality and tolerance, and its legal system that enabled greater participation of communities in the judicial process. The role of Eritrea in combating the transnational crimes of trafficking in persons, terrorism and the smuggling of migrants should be commended. In cooperation with its partners, including UNODC, Eritrea was continuing to strengthen its national capacity in fighting existing and emerging crimes.

73. **Mr. Wickramarachchi** (Sri Lanka) said that Sri Lanka had ratified and implemented the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, as amended by the Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and other relevant international instruments that constituted the cornerstone of the international drug control system. The National Dangerous Drugs Control Board was the pioneer Government institution that aimed to eradicate the drug menace in the country. Sri Lanka cooperated closely with UNODC, the World Health Organization, the International Narcotics Control Board, other international and regional organizations and the scientific community to contribute to the scientific assessment of drug supply and demand reduction policies, drug markets and drug-related crime. Sri Lanka continued to implement the operational recommendations of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

74. As a transit hub for drug trafficking, Sri Lanka had tightened its vigilance and expanded its offshore navy patrols. The Government had also adopted regulations to prevent and counter money-laundering and illicit financial flows stemming from drug trafficking and related crimes. In 2017, Sri Lanka had been working closely with the UNODC Regional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific, including on activities under the Global Maritime Crime Programme and the Global Container Control Programme. It was also actively engaged in the follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

75. Narcotic drug abuse, as a cross-cutting issue in the Sustainable Development Goals, remained one of the most important issues that needed to be addressed in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Sri Lanka was actively pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals and effectively addressing the world drug problem. It was determined to prevent and treat the abuse of such substances and prevent and counter their illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing and trafficking and reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to reducing supply and demand. Sri Lanka ensured all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the principle of equal rights when dealing with drug abuse.

76. **Ms. Mwangi** (Kenya) said that her Government reaffirmed its commitment to the implementation of the provisions of the three international drug control conventions and the recommendations of the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. Kenya was a member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and attached great importance to regional and international cooperation. Its national action plans incorporated regional policy and strategy frameworks relating to the prevention, detection, investigation and neutralization of transnational organized crime. Kenya actively participated in the Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment, which greatly enhanced empirical knowledge on vulnerability and threats in the region.

77. The Government continued to invest heavily to ensure that the criminal justice system adequately responded to all forms of organized crime. Despite efforts and significant investments in combating terrorism and organized crime networks, Kenya continued to face serious security challenges from violent extremism and the continuing threat posed by Al-Shabaab. Other daunting challenges included the proliferation of illicit drugs entering the region for trans-shipment to markets in Europe and around the world, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region, the country's vast, sparsely populated and porous borders, the illegal trade of poached animal objects, the lack of adequate capacity

for border security and inadequate identification systems.

78. As part of efforts to coordinate and implement its transnational organized crime and drug control strategy and policy, Kenya had revised its Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Act, invested in regional mechanisms for stemming the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and established mechanisms for cooperation with foreign agencies to exchange information and investigate suspected money-laundering activities. Kenya had also adopted the Prevention of Organized Crime Act, the Proceeds of Crime and Anti-money-laundering Act, the Counter-trafficking in Persons Act, the Victim Protection Act, the Anti-corruption and Economic Crimes Act, the Bribery Act, 2016, and the Access to Information Act. In addition, the Government had enhanced the main mechanisms to support international cooperation through mutual legal assistance, extradition, transfer of prisoners, transfer of proceeds in criminal matters, cooperation for the purposes of the confiscation of criminal proceeds and asset recovery in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

79. In the collective fight against transnational organized crime, Kenya called upon all Member States to comply with all mutually agreed international standards, assist each other in building capacity for international cooperation within national criminal justice systems, enhance cooperation and assistance in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and expand cooperation in the sharing of intelligence and data, training and technology without compromising national capabilities.

80. **Ms. Mukhametzyanova** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation consistently supported the central role of the United Nations in coordinating efforts to counter criminal challenges and threats, on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced approach and in strict compliance with the norms and principles of international law. It called for the further universalization and effective implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto and the Convention against Corruption. The launch of a mechanism for the review of implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto was an important task, and it was imperative for such a mechanism to be intergovernmental and non-politicized in nature and financed from the United Nations regular budget. Her Government supported the further strengthening of the legal basis of international cooperation in countering criminal challenges and threats, including the development of new international legal instruments, taking into account new types of crime. In that regard, countering cybercrime and asset recovery could be prospective subjects. While reaffirming its unwavering support for UNODC, the Russian Federation was concerned that the reduction in funding from the United Nations regular budget was having a negative impact on some of its key activities, including its scientific and research work, and hoped that the situation would improve.

81. The Russian Federation traditionally supported the strengthening of the Convention against Corruption and was of the view that other multilateral forums should not undermine that United Nations mechanism, but could, as necessary, serve as a valuable complement thereto. It was important to preserve the intergovernmental nature of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the Convention against Corruption. The fundamental principles of the mechanism must be strictly followed to ensure that the results of reviews were as objective as possible. The mechanism had proved to be an effective instrument for international cooperation and did not require any revision. It was also important to preserve and strengthen the existing international system of drug control based on the three international anticorruption conventions and the key role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The Russian Federation supported the activities of the International Narcotics Control Board, which ensured proper monitoring of the implementation of those instruments.

82. The continuing attempts to shift the centre of gravity in global drug policy by reducing the attention given to its law enforcement aspects were troubling. The Russian Federation called for a balanced approach to solving the global drug problem, emphasizing the need to pay equal attention to all its aspects. It attached great importance to the faithful fulfilment by all States of their political obligations in the effective implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action. The concluding recommendations of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem of 2016 were a tool for achieving the aims of those instruments.

83. The Russian Federation was concerned by the drug threat emanating from Afghanistan, which continued to jeopardize international peace and stability. The situation was further compounded by the increasing connections between criminal groups and terrorist organizations, including through the creation of joint channels for the laundering of criminal proceeds. The drug problem in Afghanistan must be monitored and analysed by United Nations agencies, taking into account the increase in the illegal cultivation of opium poppies in 2016 and the

subsequent increase in the illegal production of opiates.

84. In 2017, under a multilateral mechanism of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, "Canal", an operation was carried out in Belarus to combat the laundering of proceeds of drug trade, which had led not only to a significant decrease in the overall crime rate but also to the suppression of the activities of a number of transnational criminal groups. In December 2016, a large international conference entitled "Parliaments against Drugs" had been held in Moscow with the aim of further bridging efforts to find an adequate solution to the global drug threat.

85. **Ms. Oehri** (Liechtenstein) said that human trafficking and modern slavery were among the greatest human rights scandals of modern times and an obstacle to sustainable development. The United Nations had had a long-standing engagement in the fight against those crimes. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, offered a solid legal framework for cooperation in the area of law enforcement. Liechtenstein advocated universal ratification of that Convention.

86. Law enforcement and criminal justice were crucial in the fight against trafficking in persons. As its contribution to the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes under international law, the Government had identified two key areas in which it hoped it would make a difference. First, it aimed to strengthen accountability through international criminal justice mechanisms, particularly the International Criminal Court, and second, it had deployed expertise from the country's financial sector to fight money-laundering and the financing of terrorism in order to combat human trafficking.

87. Corruption allowed traffickers to operate and escape prosecution and undermined the institutions that protected citizens. It also hindered the full enjoyment of human rights, including the right to development. The United Nations Convention against Corruption was the only legally binding, universal anti-corruption instrument. In the June 2017 executive summary reviewing the implementation by Liechtenstein of that Convention, the country was shown to have a far-reaching regulatory framework for all the Convention's prevention provisions.

88. *Ms. Kaszás (Hungary), Vice-Chair, resumed the Chair.*

89. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that over the previous six years, his country had faced a prolonged crisis as various forces aimed to impose their control over the Syrian people through terrorism. It had become clear that Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism could not be implemented absent pressure on certain powerful and wealthy countries that heedlessly pursued blind policies. Those Governments believed that terrorist groups were a magic wand that could be used to redraw the Syria-Iraq border.

90. Despite the enormous suffering of the Syrian people and the huge sacrifices made in defence of the country, Syria was determined to uproot terrorism from its territory. Israel had provided money, ammunition, arms and communications to terrorist groups, and had bombed Syrian Army positions in service to a terrorist project that had begun in 1948 with the assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte by the Stern Gang.

91. The same countries that denounced terrorism in Syria had bombarded civilians. The so-called International Coalition, led by the United States and formed ostensibly to fight terrorist organizations such as ISIL, had killed more innocent civilians than terrorists and had destroyed infrastructure. The United Nations had failed to implement its Charter and the principles of international law, and it was time to think about how to reform the organization and prosecute the Governments of the member States involved in the bloodshed.

92. **Mr. Cardi** (Italy) said that, in the face of current challenges, it was obvious that the full application of the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto should be an essential component of every programme for crime prevention and criminal justice. Such a conclusion had been reached almost unanimously at the high-level debate of the General Assembly on transnational organized crime held in June 2017. The need to equip the Convention with an effective, sustainable review mechanism had also been noted. A similar assessment should be reached for the Convention against Corruption.

93. Italy had actively contributed to recent progress in the international legal framework, including by countering trafficking in persons, defending the status and rights of women and minors, with special attention to victims of crime, building on the declaration of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, consistently addressing drug abuse in a balanced manner, improving the penalty and penitentiary system, protecting cultural heritage and countering related trafficking, fighting corruption and financial crimes, responding to the abuse of the

Internet and social media by criminal and terrorist groups and supporting the work of existing and new central authorities and specialized agencies for judicial cooperation in fighting crime.

94. With a view to creating transparent societies and institutions and achieving the 2030 Agenda, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16, Italy intended to lend its support to the dissemination of a culture of legality, directed at young people in particular, the improvement of access to justice and the creation of high-tech forums to help all citizens to effectively use legal documentation.

95. **Mr. Rasuli** (Afghanistan) said that policies and strategies could not respond to the new hybrid of terrorism, transnational organized crime and illegal drug trade unless the underlying contributing factors and root causes were addressed. For Afghanistan, the threats of terrorism, transnational organized crime and illegal narcotics were particularly acute. As a result of the protracted conflicts in the country, poppy cultivation and drug addiction had increased, and the link between insecurity and poppy cultivation was obvious. Drug use was prevalent across rural and urban areas, affecting women, men, young people and children. According to a survey conducted in 2016, the number of drug addicts had soared to 3.2 million, an astonishing 12 per cent of the population. Access to drug treatment was limited, and only 109 structured drug treatment centres were currently in operation in the country, not enough to treat all those affected. The Government attached high priority to combating the drug problem with concrete policy directions. In 2017, it had eradicated 750 hectares of poppy fields, an increase of 53 per cent compared the previous year. In 2016, 2,138 drug traffickers, including foreign nationals, had been captured.

96. Successful supply reduction efforts in drug producing regions had been partially offset by the continued demand for drugs in all parts of the world. Addressing the global drug problem therefore required a comprehensive and unified response, with a focus on trade, trafficking, production and consumption. Only through joint cooperation could the current and future generations be protected from the menace of narcotics. Afghanistan remained strongly committed to fighting those issues and had already taken major steps to expand cooperation with countries of the region and beyond.

97. **Ms. Pham** Thi Kim Anh (Viet Nam) said that due to the serious impact of drugs and drug-related crime on human health, social life and development, her country had implemented a comprehensive and inclusive approach to raising public awareness and mobilizing participation in drug control programmes and drug-related crime prevention. The Government promoted crime prevention and reform of the criminal justice system, strengthened the investigation and prosecution of drug-related crimes and had established a National Committee on Drug Control. The penal code had been amended to apply severe punishments for drug-related crimes.

98. Given that a large number of methamphetamine seizures had taken place in Southeast Asia, Viet Nam had worked with ASEAN on regional approaches to the issue. It had also worked closely with other intergovernmental organizations such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization.

99. **Ms. Amadeo** (United States of America) said that UNODC played a critical role in helping Governments to combat the scourge of illicit narcotics, corruption and transnational organized crime. The United States continued to be a proud member of both the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which played leading roles in developing global responses to those threats, and the single largest donor to UNODC.

100. Her Government was highly concerned by the increase in coca cultivation and cocaine production within its hemisphere, which not only posed risks to local communities, but also fuelled transnational organized crime, corruption, money laundering and cybercrime. At the global level, the United States had an interest in working towards the achievement of a future in which all nations could be prosperous and secure. Criminals did not respect political boundaries or legal jurisdictions, forcing prosecutors and investigators to look increasingly beyond their borders to find evidence, witnesses and stolen assets. Fortunately, there was no need to develop new treaties and instruments to address those threats; Governments must rather exercise the political will to use existing ones.

101. Combating transnational crime had been identified as one of her Government's top priorities and it was strengthening efforts to dismantle criminal groups and more effectively align United States resources. As part of those efforts, a whole-of-Government response to an unprecedented health crisis due to opioids and related synthetic drugs was taking place. In 2015, more than 52,000 people had died from drug overdoses in the United States, and most of those deaths had been related to opioids.

102. In its World Drug Report 2017, UNODC had noted that an estimated 29.5 million people suffered from drug use disorders around the world. In fact, that

number might be even higher, considering the reliance in the report on self-reported data from countries. The United States was therefore investing in UNODC and the International Narcotics Control Board and stressed the urgency of focusing on the practical implementation of the commitments made at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. The United States applauded the efforts of UNODC and the International Narcotics Control Board to accelerate information-sharing and analysis with a view to securing international control of the myriad substances and precursor chemicals used to make synthetic opioids. The momentum must continue in the face of new and emerging substances.

103. An integrated and balanced strategy was needed to counter the world drug problem, and the United States would therefore strongly support international drug demand reduction programmes and was committed to addressing the corrupt behaviours that helped drug traffickers, criminals and terrorists to flourish. Most solutions to drugs and crime would be found by doctors, police officials, investigators and prosecutors, and the United States was therefore also committed to ensuring that they succeeded.

104. **Ms. Goldrick** (Nicaragua) said that Nicaragua acknowledged the full validity and relevance of all United Nations conventions on drugs and called for their effective implementation. Deregulation and legalization of drugs were not viable options; those policies would lead to increased drug use and were contrary to the provisions of current international drug control instruments. The world drug problem must be addressed while respecting each nation's specific situation, priorities and legal system, in strict compliance with the United Nations Charter and international law. The Government reaffirmed the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and encouraged the broadest international cooperation, including the exchange of experiences and good practices and the provision of greater financial and logistical resources to transit countries.

105. With international assistance, the Government, workforce and private sector in Nicaragua worked together constructively to develop programmes against modern evils such as terrorism, crime, drug trafficking, trafficking in arms and human trafficking. As a result, Nicaragua had become one of the countries least affected by organized crime in its region, with a model that was recognized worldwide. The model involved the creation of a retaining wall against drug trafficking; preventive, proactive and community-based actions focused on citizen and human security; a national campaign for a drug-free Nicaragua; and a highly effective criminal justice system. More recently, a postgraduate course had been launched to train justice system professionals in organized crime cases. The Nicaraguan model was a humble contribution to regional peace and security, and yet it was the country's main contribution to the international community. Crime prevention and criminal justice agencies formed part of a system based on citizen participation. Government policy aimed to build a State that promoted Christian values, socialist ideals and solidarity. That meant advancing policies that strengthened the family and developing programmes that promoted, protected and restored human rights.

106. **Ms. Rodriguez Camejo** (Cuba) said that her delegation supported the establishment of a review mechanism for the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, although care should be taken to ensure that its intergovernmental nature did not generate rankings among countries and to ensure that it was non-punitive in character and based on peer evaluation.

107. The cost of the scourge of drug abuse was enormous, as it reproduced the cycles of poverty, violence and various forms of criminal behaviour and social exclusion. It would be very difficult to resolve the problems of drug production and trafficking from the impoverished South without eliminating demand in the developed North. The problem would not be solved by militarizing countries, punishing farmers, or legalizing drugs. Cuba supported the existing legal framework concerning illicit drugs as well as the provisions contained in the three international conventions on the issue. Cuba had a zero tolerance policy on the production, consumption and trafficking of drugs and complied with all international obligations. It had a notable record in confronting crimes such as international terrorism, drug trafficking, money laundering, piracy and trafficking in persons. Furthermore, Cuba was a State party to 16 international anti-terrorism instruments and had enacted a comprehensive law against terrorist acts.

108. Human trafficking was very uncommon in Cuba. In April 2017 the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, had paid a visit to Cuba and had heard firsthand about the real situation of the country.

109. **Ms. Kalamwina** (Zambia) said that her Government had undertaken institutional reforms in order to reduce crime, particularly against women and children. Laws such as the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act prescribed stiff penalties for perpetrators of crimes against women and children. Zambia had

helped combat transnational organized crime as a member of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization. Joint permanent commissions on defence and security had been held with neighbouring countries to facilitate the sharing of information and best practices.

110. In 2015, Zambia had launched the National Youth Policy, which aimed to create jobs for unskilled youths and provide low-interest loans for youth-led enterprises. Such policy efforts were intended to empower young people and prevent them from engaging in drug trafficking, drug abuse and drug cultivation. Public and private institutions provided treatment, rehabilitation and social integration for drug addicts. Mechanisms had also been devised to ensure that controlled substances were available for medical and scientific purposes and not diverted to illicit uses.

111. The Government had established the Anti-Money-Laundering and Investigations Unit under the Drug Enforcement Commission, which investigated all money-laundering offences. It had also established a Financial Intelligence Centre and had enacted laws concerning forfeiture of the proceeds of crime and protections for whistle-blowers.

112. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See) said that his delegation supported creative and determined initiatives to fight the evil of international drug trafficking and drug use, which shattered lives, families and communities. It appreciated all efforts to combat the international drug trade and to treat those whose lives it threatened.

113. Generations would continue to suffer in the absence of a robust national, regional and international commitment to ending the drug trade. The problem should not be addressed by easing restrictions on drug use, but rather, the elimination of drug production and the drug trade should be vigourously pursued. The problems that gave rise to substance abuse must be addressed through the promotion of justice and by inculcating social values in the youth. Breaking the bonds of addiction was extremely difficult; a constant focus on prevention thus was necessary. The illicit drug trade was also deeply intertwined with other threats to human dignity, such as human trafficking, poverty, the breakdown of families, money laundering, government corruption, threats to the rule of law, unemployment, health risks, domestic violence and economic insecurity.

114. **Mr. Al-Mansori** (Qatar) said that his country had worked tirelessly to implement the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and had looked to the Convention as a mechanism for strengthening the criminal justice system and the rule of law. Qatar had also adopted a number of legal and executive procedures in order to address crime and combat illicit drugs.

115. The Doha Declaration, adopted at the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, had contributed greatly to the inclusion of crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider United Nations agenda. Qatar continued to work with UNODC on the follow-up to that Declaration. The country also supported special sports programmes to prevent crime among youth, as well as projects related to the rehabilitation and social reintegration of prisoners, justice education, and judicial integrity.

116. Qatar had played an effective regional role in raising awareness of anti-corruption measures. It had also established the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority and the Rule of Law and Anti-corruption Centre. Thanks to those measures, Qatar had received a high ranking on an anti-corruption survey published by Transparency International.

117. Qatar had launched an international prize for excellence in combating corruption. Every year on International Anti-Corruption Day, the prize was awarded in four areas (achievement, research and education, youth initiatives and innovation) to pay tribute to individuals and organizations that had made special efforts in the fight against corruption.

118. **Mr. Álvarez Sosa** (Dominican Republic) said that his country had a well-known vulnerability to illicit trafficking in drugs, particularly because of its geographical location, which made it a natural country of transit between producer and consumer countries. The socio-economic situation in the country, with its high poverty rate, made it easier to understand the problem of drug trafficking because it was seen as a solution by the worst-off. However, although the Dominican Republic was not a producer of illicit drugs and had one of the lowest rates of consumption in the world, it had a very high risk of drug use.

119. Most drug users in the Dominican Republic were between the ages of 15 and 34. The Government was very concerned about the problem of street children and adolescents who had been in trouble with the law. Almost half had been arrested for theft, and most had taken drugs, particularly crack cocaine and marijuana. Most criminal offenses in the country were committed by youths between the ages of 18 and 21 whose chief motive was to obtain drugs. Nevertheless, respect for the human rights for all drug users, including the right of universal access to healthcare services, should never

be questioned.120 While the Dominican Republic had made great strides in reducing the murder rate trafficking and consumption of drugs and alcohol among youth, along with the use of firearms, had become the main drivers of violence in recent years. Studies had shown that many adolescents who had committed crimes had used drugs and other illicit substances in the previous weeks or days.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/72/SR.6

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Third Committee

Summary record of the 6th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 4 October 2017, at 3 p.m.

Chair:	Mr. Gunnarsson	(Iceland)
later:	Ms. Al-Temimi (Vice-Chair)	(Qatar)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 107: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/72/125 and A/72/91)

Agenda item 108: International drug control (*continued*) (A/72/225)

1. **Mr. Mahmadaminov** (Tajikistan) said that combating drug trafficking, which was a growing threat to international stability and security, required joint and coordinated efforts. The international community and regional and international organizations must coordinate measures aimed at reducing drug demand and supply, and integrate efforts undertaken at the national and regional levels into the international strategy for narcotics control.

2. To that end, his country worked with regional organizations and relevant United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), with which it published an annual review of the national drug situation that was widely used by law enforcement officers for research, analysis and planning purposes. It also cooperated closely with Afghanistan, China, the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

3. The national strategy on combating illicit drug trafficking in Tajikistan, which covered the period 2013–2020, was intended to significantly reduce the illicit distribution of narcotic drugs and their non-medical use, to reduce the scale of the consequences of their illicit trafficking for health, safety, society and State security, as well as to expand international cooperation. The Drug Control Agency, which had been established with support from UNODC and other donors, was tasked with combating drug trafficking and smuggling, organized crime and drug abuse. In the first half of 2017, it had seized 2.5 tons of narcotics. Such measures had created the conditions for reducing the number of drug-related crimes.

4. **Mr. Skinner-Klée** (Guatemala) said that drugs were destroying his country's social fabric, depleting its resources, undermining security and democracy, and jeopardizing the rights, health, education and development of Guatemalans. His Government was determined to design public policies that would safeguard human rights and strengthen its capacity to prosecute those involved in the illegal drug trade and money-laundering. It was working with international partners to combat organized crime, corruption and drug trafficking.

5. Seizures of cocaine had doubled and the destruction of marijuana plants was up fourfold, while opium poppy eradication and heroin seizures had remained stable. Thanks to the expansion of the Global Container Control Programme, which had been implemented following the signing of a memorandum of understanding with UNODC, Guatemala had reduced the use of containers to smuggle drugs and chemical precursors. In addition, inter-agency task forces had been established to carry out security operations, in particular along the borders with Mexico, El Salvador and Honduras.

6. Given the growing demand for drugs and the vast profits involved in the illicit drug trade, which led to institutional corruption and violence, he questioned whether prohibition was the best way to address the drug problem. International efforts had not succeeded in reducing violence, money-laundering and arms trafficking; the international community must rethink its options, with the support of the United Nations.

7. **Mr. Joshi** (India) said that despite the raft of international treaties and conventions designed to address transborder crime, terrorist organizations continued to expand their reach and destabilize entire regions; new conflicts, often involving non-State actors, were forcing large numbers of people to flee, making them vulnerable to organized crime syndicates; money-laundering, fraud and trafficking of persons, arms and drugs were on the rise; and new crimes were emerging, such as cybercrime.

8. The cross-border nature of such crimes posed a serious challenge, as the international community's response was often too slow to be effective. There was a need for real-time intelligence sharing, better coordination of operations and increased capacity-building and technological assistance. While existing conventions addressed many issues, there were areas where global solutions remained to be found. For instance, little progress had been made with regard to the comprehensive convention on international terrorism, and there was no common understanding of how to address issues such as cybersecurity.

9. At the national level, India had adopted a multi-stakeholder approach to combating human trafficking and had set up anti-trafficking cells across the country. With regard to cybercrime, it had enacted legislation and established training and investigative laboratories.

10. The Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act addressed drug trafficking and abuse, while allowing the promotion of drugs for medical and scientific purposes. As a supplier of opiate raw material and a longstanding cultivator of licit opium, India had endeavoured to uphold its responsibilities in

accordance with the principles of the three international drug conventions, including the principle of balance. The country had established a committee and an online monitoring system to identify new psychoactive substances. The manufacture and trade of drug precursors was regulated with a view to preventing diversion without interfering with the legitimate manufacture, trade and use of precursors. India had signed memorandums of cooperation on drug trafficking with 34 countries, including its neighbours, and strongly supported the Paris Pact initiative.

11. **Ms. Bellout** (Algeria) said that given the challenges posed by organized crime and drug trafficking, which strained sustainable development efforts, her country had adopted a comprehensive programme to modernize its legal system. Her Government was committed to the implementation of the United Nations conventions relating to issues of drugs and crime, especially those forbidding the trafficking of cultural goods. The problem of cybercrime had also become a major challenge for the international community and required collective action in the areas of legislation and capacity-building.

12. Organized crime and drug trafficking also created favourable conditions for violent extremism and terrorism, and all sources of financing for such activities, especially those deriving from drug trafficking, must be cut off. The fact that the headquarters of AFRIPOL, the African Police Cooperation Organization, was located in Algeria demonstrated its leadership in and concern for the well-being of its neighbours. Her Government had put in place several measures to strengthen research, investigative and analytical work to address organized crime. Its approach to drugs was based on the three pillars of prevention, treatment and restrictive measures, and Algeria had significant infrastructure and facilities to support its goals in that area.

13. **Mr. Yarkovich** (Belarus) said that, in the fight against transnational organized crime, Belarus paid particular attention to combating trafficking in persons. It welcomed the recent high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the adoption of a political declaration. It also took note of the conclusions of the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, at which the resolution on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action had been adopted. Recognizing the contribution of UNODC to international efforts to combat trafficking in persons and the coordinating role of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, Belarus recommended that UNODC should create a single United Nations database of national coordinators and mechanisms for combating trafficking in persons and convene a senior-level meeting to develop joint actions. The Internet had been used for trafficking in persons on multiple occasions. It was therefore time to adopt an international instrument to coordinate international cooperation in the elimination of Internet forums and the prohibition of servers used to carry out such criminal activity.

14. The way out of the extremely troubling situation in the global fight against drugs lay in the strengthening of multilateral cooperation among States, international and regional organizations, businesses, civil society and the media. Belarus supported the international legal and institutional framework for combating drugs and work to strengthen the three international anti-drug conventions and adapt them to the new realities. It was firmly against all calls to legalize drugs and break the taboos surrounding them, and called upon the international community to rally against the new generation of drug threats, including new psychoactive substances and the sale of psychotropic agents on the Internet. Efforts must also be mobilized to prevent drug use among children and adolescents.

15. **Mr. Santiago** (Philippines) said that addressing the pervasive drug problem was one of his Government's top priorities. Under President Duterte, the anti-drug campaign had been strengthened, with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, faith-based groups and the private sector all playing a role. Seizures of illegal drugs, drug-related arrests and closures of clandestine laboratories were at an all-time high and his Government was working with civil society to introduce community-based programmes for young people, vulnerable groups and high-risk populations.

16. In response to the unprecedented number of drug-dependent persons who had surrendered to the authorities, the Dangerous Drugs Board had developed guidelines on community-based intervention that would be implemented through local anti-drug abuse councils. With support from the private sector and international partners, in-patient rehabilitation facilities were being built across the country and sustainable treatment and rehabilitation programmes were being implemented in cooperation with civil society. In addition to addressing illicit crop cultivation, his Government was working to provide livelihood opportunities for those in urban areas.

17. The Government was also using technology and social media to disseminate information and carry out advocacy. Every individual had a key role to play in promoting positive values within their social circles. The ultimate goal was to ensure that all Filipinos lived in safe, drug-free communities. Nevertheless, the anti-drug campaign should not be waged in a manner that undermined its legitimacy. Law enforcement officials had to abide by established procedures and the Government was committed to adhering to the rule of law and human rights obligations.

18. **Ms. Kipiani** (Georgia) said that reforming the criminal justice system was one of her Government's top priorities. It was committed to ensuring that the criminal justice system was impartial, accountable and efficient, with an independent and fair judiciary and a legal framework focused on crime prevention and protection of human rights. In that connection, her Government had implemented a number of reforms.

19. It had established human rights protection procedures and monitoring mechanisms to prevent human rights violations. A major reform of the prosecution service was under way, with a view to transforming it into an independent, effective, transparent and accountable institution. Emphasis had been placed on protecting human rights and increasing engagement with community members. Oversight and scrutiny of the national security service had improved and secret surveillance operations were subject to greater judicial overview.

20. In addition, the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence had entered into force in Georgia in September 2017. In accordance with the Convention, a number of amendments had been made to the Criminal Code, including broadening the legal remedies available for victims, criminalizing stalking and female genital mutilation and providing a clear legal definition of rape.

21. **Mr. Uğurluoğlu** (Turkey) said that human trafficking, which had become a profitable business for terrorist organizations, had immense social and economic costs. Given that Governments acting individually could not prevent human trafficking, the international community must work together and, with a view to being seen as relevant, trusted and responsive, develop inclusive, human rights-based approaches. Turkey, which hosted more refugees than any other country, was determined to prevent refugees from falling victim to human trafficking, forced labour and slavery. It had taken a number of steps in that regard, including establishing a coordination commission, revising the national action plan on human trafficking, setting up a multilingual helpline and creating victim support and voluntary return programmes.

22. His Government had reinforced existing measures to prevent the illegal transfer of cultural property from its country of origin in response to increasing incidences of such illicit transfer, and of destruction of cultural property. The relevant authorities were also heightening their vigilance to prevent the removal of historical artefacts from Turkey.

23. Turkey was committed to combating terrorism in all its forms without distinction. It would continue to fight all terrorist organizations, including the Fethullah Terrorist Organization, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaida, the Kurdish Workers Party and the Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat. The international community must act with equal determination against all terrorist organizations; a selective approach was unacceptable. In addition, States must ensure that terrorists were brought to justice. Effective implementation of the obligation to extradite or prosecute was crucial. Given the link between terrorism and organized crime, efforts must be made to tackle human, drug and arms trafficking and money-laundering.

24. The world drug problem must be approached comprehensively. Turkey contributed to bilateral and multilateral efforts to fight drug abuse and trafficking. Due to its geographic location, Turkey was exposed to an extensive flow of illicit goods. Its counter-narcotics policy was based on three pillars: combating domestic distribution networks; dismantling international drug trafficking networks; and investigating the financing of terrorist groups — in particular the Kurdish Workers Party — through drug trafficking. The national strategy on drugs and the action plan, which covered the period 2016–2018, had been implemented in 2016.

25. **Mr. Itegboje** (Nigeria) said that his Government had recently reformed the criminal justice system with a view to ensuring that the principles of equality, accountability and fairness were respected. It had also brought its legislation into line with article 44 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption to strengthen the fight against corruption and transnational organized crime.

26. Since the establishment of the national drug law enforcement agency, his Government had taken a number of measures to combat drug trafficking and abuse. It had rolled out a country-wide drug prevention programme for fourteen-year-olds, which was proving extremely successful; developed a training programme

for school counsellors; established treatment, aftercare and HIV/AIDS programmes; used social media to disseminate information to vulnerable groups; set up toll-free helplines and introduced online counselling; and established a support network for drug-dependent persons at all stages of recovery.

27. In addition, in an effort to reduce the supply of drugs, Nigeria had continued to implement anti-money-laundering measures to prevent criminals from keeping the proceeds of drug-related crime and had improved information-sharing through the National Financial Intelligence Unit. However, cannabis cultivation remained a considerable challenge. Cannabis had accounted for the bulk of drugs seized in Nigeria in 2016, with some 180,000 kilograms of cannabis seized. In addition, over 700 hectares of cannabis farmland had been destroyed.

28. *Ms. Al-Temimi (Qatar), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

29. **Ms. Sucharikul** (Thailand) said that while the duty of the State was to uphold and respect the rule of law, its people were the ultimate beneficiaries. Therefore the rule of law should ensure the improvement of livelihoods for all people, especially those who were often marginalized, bring perpetrators to justice and end impunity. Her delegation believed that countries could not fully achieve sustainable development as long as crimes persisted without due justice. Thailand had led several efforts nationally and internationally, including support for female and pregnant inmates and their children and strict implementation of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

30. With regard to human and drug trafficking, which was a nexus between crime and development, it was clearly necessary to mainstream the rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice into all efforts towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Thailand had adopted a zero-tolerance policy on human trafficking, and the needs of all vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, needed to be duly considered and appropriate assistance furnished to the victims of trafficking.

31. National strategies contained components of drug prevention, suppression, treatment and rehabilitation, and social integration in order to address the issue of narcotics control. Alternatives to imprisonment were encouraged and specialized legislation and commissions were functioning as new elements of the approach to criminal justice. A new law on penitentiaries, for instance, would change the core mission of correctional services from punishment to rehabilitation and bring practices in line with human rights principles and international standards. The crop substitution project begun over 50 years earlier was a success story in terms of alternative development, and its principles might be applied in urban settings in the future.

32. **Mr. Munir** (Pakistan) said that the discussion on the world drug problem was timely, and the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly held in 2016 had reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to address the issue. The report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation against the world drug problem (A/72/225) noted that despite some important progress, new psychotropic substances belonging to diverse chemical groups continued to emerge around the world, and rapid changes in trafficking routes, modus operandi and concealment methods called for better international cooperation.

33. The policies of his Government for countering narcotics were based on the main pillars of supply reduction, demand reduction and international cooperation, and his country, fully committed to working towards a drug-free world, had made great contributions through coordinated seizure operations. Given that the objective was to build a drug-free society, not a drug-tolerant one, his delegation was concerned by the counterproductive trends in some parts of the world to legalize the use of illicit drugs. Such approaches would ignite the supply chain and lead to fallout in the region of his country. His delegation believed that a comprehensive approach that addressed not only the symptoms, but also the root causes of drug crimes, was needed. Money-laundering and corruption were still formidable challenges, and Pakistan had taken special measures in the context of the Anti-Money-Laundering Act, 2010 to combat money-laundering and terrorist financing.

34. His Government, as a member of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs, emphasized the need to strengthen the Commission's leading role in drug prevention, treatment and care, and was unwaveringly committed to close cooperation with the international community to promote prosperity in a changing world.

35. **Mr. Bin Momen** (Bangladesh) said that in an interconnected and interdependent world, criminal networks operated transnationally, in an organized manner and as opportunists, manipulating crime prevention and justice systems. Concerted efforts were needed, and as a party to the relevant United Nations conventions, his country had been making efforts to combat those crimes. A holistic approach should be adopted and best practices shared in order to address

the factors of human trafficking, prioritizing the needs of poor, marginalized and vulnerable people, especially women and children. Bangladesh was consistently engaged with various United Nations initiatives, groups, deliberations and platforms, while at the national level, it had enacted legislation and established several plans and committees concerning efforts against human trafficking including prevention, protection, legal justice, partnership development, and data collection and analysis.

36. His country had also been at the forefront of deliberations to promote safe, orderly and regular migration, and was attempting to retain the human-trafficking dimension in the migration discourse. The geographical location of Bangladesh, on a production-transit-consumption route, made it very difficult to control drug trafficking and its related abuses, which were rising. His Government was devising new strategies to address the problem, such as introducing awareness campaigns, engaging with families and other stakeholders, and arranging for treatment, rehabilitation and assistance for those in need.

37. A policy of zero tolerance towards all forms of terrorism and violent extremism was being maintained, and bold steps had been taken to prevent financing and other support for terrorism and radicalization. The Government had also established new law-enforcement units and strengthened existing ones in order to investigate, prosecute and block all forms of organized crime and illicit financial flows for criminal activities.

38. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, priority should be placed on strengthening the rule of law, preventing crime, and promoting fair, human and accountable criminal justice systems.

39. **Ms. Gonzalez Tolosa** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her Government was committed to combating the drug problem, complying with its international obligations under the International Drug Control Conventions, the human rights treaties and the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and strengthening its institutions.

40. Under the National Anti-Drug Plan 2015–2019, the Government had strengthened its efforts to combat organized criminal groups involved in the illegal drug trade by equipping and updating the relevant bodies. It had implemented many of the operational recommendations that had resulted from the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. . The National Anti-Narcotics Office had established a national prevention system, which sought to involve the public in the development of initiatives intended to prevent drug abuse and aid treatment and rehabilitation.

41. There was a need to better understand the causes of the world drug problem, address the health and safety consequences of the illegal drug trade and prioritize evidence-based measures. Her country had made progress, in particular in the area of supply reduction, and had been free of illicit crops for over a decade. Currently its efforts were focused on intelligence gathering, monitoring and preventing trafficking.

42. It was important to respect the three pillars of the international drug control conventions, namely supply reduction, demand reduction and international cooperation, in addition to international law and the principles of sovereignty, non-interference and self-determination. Venezuela rejected all unilateral lists and certifications, which jeopardized the efforts of States to tackle the drug problem and undermined international cooperation. In that connection, her country was working with its neighbours to combat the drug problem, had signed over 40 international legal instruments and had helped to dismantle international drug cartels operating in the region.

43. **Mr. Bultrikov** (Kazakhstan) said that the fight against the serious threats of transnational organized crime, the illicit drug trade and human trafficking should be carried out in close cooperation among States and relevant regional and international organizations. The world drug problem jeopardized public health and safety, targeted youth and children, undermined socioeconomic and political stability, and constituted a threat to sustainable development. Member States must place individuals and societies at the centre of all policy directives in addressing the problem, and take an approach that was based on scientific evidence and the participation of affected populations and civil society entities.

44. His country participated in the regional and international programmes of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and was particularly interested in the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre and the interdepartmental groups on the control of shipping containers at the port of Aktau. His Government welcomed the work of regional organizations such as the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, and reiterated its commitment to work with the international community at all levels and with all United Nations

mechanisms towards a world free of transnational crime, illicit trafficking of drugs and human beings, especially women, and corruption.

45. **Ms. Horbachova** (Ukraine) said that the complex problems of drugs, organized crime, trafficking, corruption, money-laundering and terrorism financing, with all of their interlinkages, required better bilateral, regional and international cooperation on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in the context of the United Nations system. Her delegation welcomed the practice of holding joint meetings of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Her Government remained committed to improving its drug-demand reduction programmes, including the components of primary prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, rehabilitation, social reintegration and related support services, aimed at promoting health and social well-being in full compliance with international drug-control conventions, in accordance with national legislation, and with full respect for human rights, and welcomed global actions taken to address the issues.

46. Her delegation recognized the crucial role that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, International Narcotics Control Board and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime played in delivering technical assistance to Member States, including through joint implementation of projects. The Office had helped States to apply the relevant United Nations standards and norms and improve their national criminal justice systems to operate more effectively under the rule of law, and her delegation encouraged the Office to make further efforts in that regard, noting with appreciation the launch of the Strategic Partnership and Programmatic Actions Framework in Eastern Europe for 2017–2020.

47. The challenge her country faced in implementing key international legal instruments to combat human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants was exacerbated by massive internal migration fuelled by the ongoing conflict in the Donbas region, initiated and prolonged by Russia, as well as the occupation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. The civilian population in certain areas remained extremely vulnerable to threats related to trafficking in human beings, particularly forced labour and military recruitment. The international community should respond accordingly.

48. Her delegation also concerned itself with the problems of cybercrime and corruption, and was grateful to the Office and the donor community for supporting her country in combating HIV/AIDS, corruption, money-laundering and drug trafficking.

49. **Mr. Wang** Zhaoxue (China) said that the international community needed to strengthen cooperation in such areas as crime prevention, criminal justice, combating corruption, transnational organized crime and drug prohibition. In the context of the recent increase in incidents of cybercrime and transnational telecommunications fraud and ransomware attacks, his delegation supported the work of the group of experts on cybercrime as well as the formulation of an international legal instrument on cybercrime, and was grateful for the assistance furnished by States concerned.

50. His Government took seriously the issues of wildlife crime and illicit trafficking of cultural objects, among others, and wished to enhance cooperation in that regard. It also attached great importance to the work of combating corruption, and anticipated that the seventh Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption would be successful. All parties should earnestly implement the Convention and eliminate political and legal obstacles to cooperation in tracking fugitives and recovering assets transnationally so that corrupt officials and their illicit gains would have nowhere to hide. The parties should adhere to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, respect for sovereignty, and the intergovernmental nature of review mechanisms, so as to properly conduct the second cycle of the review and improve working efficiency.

51. Parties should apply the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime as a form of judicial support and a legal basis for cooperation in the areas of extradition and asset recovery. His delegation supported the establishment of an effective mechanism for reviewing the implementation of the Convention, and was of the view that all parties should engage in the intergovernmental process and ensure a non-invasive and non-punitive character in the design of the mechanism, while drawing on experiences relating to its equivalent for the Convention against Corruption and ensuring the availability of reliable funding.

52. Countries should address the problem of human trafficking through education, legislation, law enforcement and social protections, focus on acts of trafficking and strengthen cooperation in law enforcement among countries of origin, transit and destination. Large-scale migration posed serious challenges to the international community, but migrants played a positive role in the sustainable

development of countries of origin and destination. All countries should promote safe, regular and orderly migration and focus on the root causes of trafficking, such as poverty and disproportionate development between regions.

53. In order to resolve the world drug problem, States should prioritize the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, which were complementary to one another. China supported the three main drug control conventions as the foundation of the international drug control system, and opposed all forms of legalization of illicit drugs. It supported the leading role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Narcotics Control Board and objected to any attempt to weaken their status.

54. In the fight against narcotic drugs, consideration should be given to the promotion of human rights as well as the stability and collective interests of society. However, no undue emphasis should be given to human rights issues, as that would undermine the effectiveness of law enforcement. Each country was entitled to formulate drug control policies best suited to its national conditions in conformity with the three conventions. The question of the death penalty should not be associated with that of narcotic drugs. The international community should pay attention to the inadequate supply of basic medicines in some countries and the abuse, overuse and illicit transfer of controlled substances in other countries.

55. **Mr. Teffo** (South Africa) said that although his Government respected the sovereign right of a country to review its policies concerning illicit drugs and their usage, it was important to maintain compliance with commitments made by Member States under the three main drug control conventions. His delegation welcomed initiatives such as the United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence. As a signatory State to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Government of South Africa was mindful of the need to mainstream gender in its pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Government had promulgated a number of legislative instruments to address the structural manifestations of patriarchy.

56. South Africa was a source, transit and destination country for persons subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. His delegation welcomed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals and targets relating to trafficking in persons, as well as the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. However, they needed to be supported by action and political commitments at all levels. His delegation welcomed the generous funding pledges made to that end by certain Member States, as well as the outcomes, particularly the draft questionnaires, of the recent sessions of the working groups tasked with the issues of trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants.

57. According to disturbing statistics furnished in 2016 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 94 per cent of poaching in Africa in 2014 had taken place in his own country. His Government was therefore undertaking efforts to protect the magnificent natural flora and fauna from the threat of the illegal wildlife trade.

58. **Mr. Thein** (Myanmar) said that his country was implementing its international commitments in close cooperation with UNODC and INTERPOL. States and international organizations must work together to combat transnational crime and his Government appreciated the support it had received from its international partners. Myanmar was simultaneously tackling violent extremism, money-laundering, corruption, smuggling of wildlife and drugs and human trafficking through relevant mechanisms. In the area of human trafficking, Myanmar was focusing on policy and cooperation, prevention, protection and prosecution, as set forth in a five-year action plan.

59. Combating narcotic drugs was a longstanding priority for Myanmar, but poppy cultivation continued despite the efforts of successive Governments. The eradication of methamphetamine posed another serious challenge, owing to illegal inflows of precursor chemicals. The narcotic drugs problem was primarily being addressed through supply and demand reduction and law enforcement. His Government was drafting a new drug control policy that took a balanced and integrated multisectoral approach, in line with the recommendations emanating from the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. A number of working groups and committees had been

established at different levels, which were working in close cooperation to reduce production and use. Other strategies included raising awareness of the dangers of narcotic drugs among school children and young people; deploying law enforcement units to the parts of the country where drug production and trafficking was most prevalent; and establishing drug treatment and rehabilitation services. Lastly, Myanmar was collaborating with countries at the bilateral, subregional and regional levels to reduce demand.

60. **Mr. Poudel Chhetri** (Nepal) said that the declaration adopted in September 2017 during the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons reflected the collective will to end all forms of trafficking. The commitments made should be translated into action and the requisite resources should be made available without delay. International support was required to build the capacity of developing countries, and focused and sustained partnerships with international organizations were an essential aspect of transnational crime prevention.

61. As a country with large numbers of outbound migrant workers, Nepal was particularly hard hit by trafficking in persons. However, it was committed to countering it at the national, regional and global levels and had enacted the Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act in line with the provisions of international conventions. In cooperation with UNODC and the European Union, his Government had also launched the Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants in Nepal in March 2017.

62. The drug problem was exacerbated where there were strong links between drug trafficking and human trafficking. Concerted international efforts were required to combat the interconnected nature of transnational crime and dismantle entire networks. The Narcotic Drugs Control Act prohibited the production, storage, sale, consumption and trade of all types of narcotics and psychotropic substances, and his Government had formulated additional policies and strategies to monitor and review its implementation. Nepal was committed to working with the international community to strengthen its capacity to tackle transnational crime.

63. **Ms. Sorto Rosales** (El Salvador) said that three areas should be given priority in order to combat the world drug problem effectively. The first was to capture the drug lords; the second was to develop a more effective anti-money-laundering strategy; and the third was to improve the mechanisms for confiscating property acquired using the proceeds of crime, which would strike a blow to the criminal organizations and enable those resources to be used to fund development in the countries affected and to combat the illegal drug trade.

64. The 2016–2021 national anti-drugs strategy had been adopted in October 2016 and reflected the recommendations emanating from the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. It explicitly recognized that drug dependence was first and foremost a public health problem, and professional and non-professional staff were being trained in the prevention and treatment of drug consumption with the support of the Organization of American States and the European Union.

65. Joint action to tackle the world drug problem should be based on the principle of common and shared responsibility; international cooperation and technical and financial assistance must therefore be coordinated and coherent. Support was key to both prevention, which would reduce demand, and to countering organized crime, which would reduce supply.

66. **Mr. Konfourou** (Mali) said that the crisis in his country was being fuelled by terrorism, violent extremism and other forms of transnational organized crime, including drug, arms and human trafficking. Combating the illegal drug trade was therefore a national priority, since its proceeds were the main source of funding for terrorist activity and organized crime. A law had been adopted in 2001 on controlling drugs and precursors, and an inter-ministerial mission to coordinate the fight against drugs and a central drug office had been established. Significant results had already been achieved: a record amount of cannabis had been seized in 2016, which had resulted in the prosecution of 175 people.

67. However, Mali needed the support of the international community to tackle such challenges as creating an information system to collect and disseminate reliable information on drug trafficking, and setting up specialized centres to care for drug addicts. The regional office of UNODC was providing support to implement a project on strengthening the criminal justice system and enforcing the law in the Sahel with a view to preventing and combating the illegal drug trade and transnational crime and their links to terrorism.

68. The Group of Five for the Sahel had been established to enhance cooperation on the common challenges of development and security. A joint force

would shortly be deployed to fight terrorism, organized transnational crime and migrant trafficking, which would help create the conditions for sustainable development. However, the root causes of destabilization must be addressed, such as extreme poverty, endemic youth unemployment and exclusion, and they were the subject of the Group's priority investment programme.

69. **Ms. Martinic** (Argentina) said that, since the new Government had taken office in 2015, a new comprehensive and balanced strategy had been devised to address the problem of drug trafficking and the responsibilities for tackling the drug problem had been redistributed at the national level. In the area of supply reduction, and in light of the extension of the state of public security emergency, a strategy was being implemented by federal, provincial and customs officials working in close coordination to dismantle criminal organizations.

70. Argentina had improved its data collection by introducing a single form to report procedures and had completed its first-ever mapping of all drug seizures. During 2016, many agents had received training on the latest developments in the fight against the illegal drug trade. Considerable progress had also been made over the past year on the legislative front; in particular, laws had been adopted penalizing the diversion of precursor chemicals for drug manufacture and establishing a federal council on precursor chemicals.

71. With regard to collaboration with international organizations, Argentina was implementing the Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP) and in 2016 had received its first visit from the International Narcotics Control Board in 10 years. It was also participating more actively in the early warning systems on precursor chemicals and new psychoactive substances.

72. **Mr. al-Teraifi** (Bahrain) said that his country had established a number of voluntary, legal and administrative mechanisms to counter the spread of illicit drugs and had forged strong partnerships with relevant stakeholders within Bahraini society with a view to raising public awareness of the dangers that those drugs posed.

73. An anti-narcotics office at the Ministry of the Interior investigated drug crimes and carried out arrests of perpetrators of drug-related offences, and specialized anti-drugs units at the country's border crossings monitored the arrival and departure of travellers, in coordination with relevant authorities in other States and INTERPOL. Bahrain had, moreover, increased the penalties for drug-related crimes and adopted legislation to combat money-laundering. It had also signed numerous international instruments on drugs, including all three international drug control treaties and worked with other Arab and Gulf States to combat illicit drug use. Furthermore, in coordination with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Bahrain had established a national anti-drug committee and, in 2015, had successfully implemented a national anti-drug policy.

74. Bahrain was also seeking to raise awareness among young people of the dangers of illicit drug use. To that end, it had launched a national youth drug prevention programme as well as a programme to address violence and addiction in schools, which had been implemented in some 90 schools across the country. Bahrain believed that drug addiction should be viewed, primarily, as a medical condition rather than as a criminal justice matter; his country therefore sought to provide addicts with medical treatment instead of bringing them before the courts and was establishing a state-of-the-art hospital specializing in drug addiction that would draw upon global best practices and cutting edge research in order to provide drug addicts with the best possible treatment.

75. **Ms. Haidour** (Morocco) said that the international community should invest in prevention and support for drug addicts in order to reduce the cost of health services, improve security and contribute to social cohesion and development. National policies to combat the drug problem included strategies for demand reduction; better sharing of information and best practices for supply reduction; and measures to promote alternative development.

76. With regard to supply reduction, government efforts to combat cannabis cultivation had reduced the cannabis crop by over 65 per cent. Significant resources were also being directed towards projects to foster alternative development, in particular in the northern provinces. In addition, Morocco was working to optimize its border control in light of the deteriorating security situation in the Sahelo-Saharan States and in some Maghreb countries.

77. In terms of demand reduction, Morocco was implementing a national plan of action to combat addiction, which had taken account of the recommendations of the World Health Organization. Her Government believed that demand reduction policies should be linked to alternative development policies at the national, regional and international levels.

78. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Azerbaijan) said that his country had made significant progress in amending its criminal legislation in such areas as safeguarding the rights of prisoners and modernizing the judiciary. Some economic offences had been decriminalized and a national probation service to supervise non-custodial sentences had been established in February 2017 by means of a presidential order.

79. Joint action plans had been signed with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to support the juvenile justice system. The action plans covered matters such as reforming the administration of justice for juveniles, providing training for law enforcement agencies and conducting public awareness campaigns. The Public Committee, which was made up of representatives of civil society, was responsible for ensuring transparency and public oversight of the justice system.

80. With regard to human trafficking, Azerbaijan had adopted a law and three consecutive national action plans on the subject, and had added four new articles to the Criminal Code. A dedicated police unit had been set up within the Ministry of the Interior and a national mechanism was responsible for coordinating the activities of government agencies, civil society organizations and foreign partners. Information on human trafficking was exchanged with other countries on the basis of 90 bilateral and multilateral agreements, memorandums and protocols.

81. Lastly, the national anti-corruption policy was implemented principally through the State Agency for Services and Social Innovations to Citizens, which provided a myriad of public services under one roof, and maintained a policy of complete transparency and zero tolerance of corruption.

82. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his Government was continuing to call for the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive strategy to combat illicit drugs that, away from political considerations, ensured the expansion of regional and international cooperation on the principle of collective and international shared responsibility. Unfortunately, the brunt of the burden was still mainly borne by transit countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran had sustained huge losses of life and expended billions of dollars in order to deprive the merchants of death of the bulk of their illicit drugs and protect part of the global community from the evil of addiction. Thousands of Iranian law enforcement officers had lost their lives or had been maimed in the country's relentless campaign to stem the flow of drugs. While drug traffickers with links to terrorist groups and organized crime targeted the fabric of Iranian society and stole its youth, the support provided by the international community had been negligible.

83. His Government had implemented comprehensive programmes to reduce demand for drugs, which included prevention, harm reduction, treatment and rehabilitation services. The coverage of the prevention programmes and voluntary enrolment in harm-reduction and treatment services stood at 40 per cent. As a result, HIV transmission among intravenous drug users had fallen by 60 per cent. Under the Government's community-based approach, over 85 per cent of demand-reduction programmes were run by non-governmental and private organizations. To reduce the prison population, alternative punishments for those convicted of drug-related offences had been implemented, and harm-reduction and treatment services had been introduced in prisons. Following a recent review of national drug policy, the death penalty would apply only to the most serious drug crimes. With regard to mechanisms, the three international drug control conventions, by virtue of their scope and flexibility, formed the bedrock of the international system to combat illicit drugs.

84. **Ms. Mukhtar** (Sudan) said that, in accordance with its regional and international commitments, her country was making every effort to combat human trafficking, illicit drugs and terrorism. With the support of the African Union and the European Union, her country had hosted an international conference in 2014 on human trafficking and smuggling in the Horn of Africa and a follow-up conference had been held on that theme in Italy later that year. She called on donor countries to provide Sudan with the support it required to implement the outcomes of the two conferences.

85. Sudan had enacted legislation to combat human trafficking, particularly the trafficking of women and children, and had also signed border control agreements with neighbouring states to strengthen its efforts to combat arms trafficking and the activities of organized criminal gangs and terrorists.

86. Her country had adopted a national strategy on illicit drugs in 2015 and had also passed a number of related laws, including a law to combat money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. The country's financial investigations unit had been strengthened and Sudan had also streamlined the procedures by which the country dealt with extradition requests and could seize illicitly-gained financial assets. As a result of those efforts, the Financial Action Task Force had certified that Sudan was in compliance

with its anti-money-laundering and countering terrorist financing obligations.

87. Sudan had also amended its law on illicit drugs and psychotropic substances to bring it into line with relevant international instruments, and had adopted regulations to ensure that drugs were used appropriately in the medical field. Sudan had also taken steps to strengthen the relationship between citizens and the police in urban areas, which had led to a reduction in crime levels.

88. A number of United Nations reports published in recent months, including the report issued in April 2017 by the Panel of Experts on the Sudan, had underscored how armed movements in Darfur had evolved into criminal groups that financed their activities by perpetrating human trafficking operations and highway robberies. Sudan was fully committed to combating those criminal activities, and would continue to collaborate with the international community to that end. In that regard, she drew attention to her country's exemplary cooperation with the European Union in its efforts to combat human trafficking. Sudan called on peace partners, donor countries and other friendly States to increase their financial and technical assistance with a view to combating that phenomenon as well as the illicit drug trade and international terrorism.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.